

# WIRE

DOUBLE ISSUE

Lester Bowie

Branford Marsalis

Dexter Gordon

Frank Zappa

Serge Chaloff

Loose Tubes

Paul Lovens

Paul Lytton

Jamie Talbot

Sonny Rollins

Pablo Picasso

Roy Eldridge

Lonette McKee

Eddie Durham

Johnny Dyani

Kalle Laar

Holger Hiller

Tom Harrell

New York

Warsaw





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WIRE MAGAZINE

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RICHARD COOK

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WIRF MAGAZINE WISHES OUR READERS A PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR  
Richard Cook Joanne Harris Paul Elliman Jayne Houghton Chris Parsons Lorraine Bowen

## Best Dressed Tour

THE RECORDS, featuring Lol Coxhill, Mike Cooper and Roger Turner embark on a tour of England in December. The dates are (30th Nov) Monkey's Club, Birmingham; (1st) Joiners Arms, Southampton; (3rd) Liverpool Bluecoat Gallery; (4th) Sheffield Leadmill; (5th) Leeds Adelphi. The tour is subsidised by the Arts Council, and is to promote a new album on Naxos records, called *'Baroque Struts'*

## Chocs Away

AFI ARI-CUBAN trumpeter Alfredo Chocolate Armenteros plays five nights at The Bass Clef from 9th-13th December inclusive. He is backed by Robin Jones's band King Salsa. Cost is £5, the show starts 8.45pm

## Blooming Changes

R10 RUN RADIO, the commercial station covering the Lancashire area has rescheduled its jazz programme, from November. The weekly one-hour show presented by Derek Webster now goes out on Tuesday evenings at 9pm. Red Rose Radio presents a wide range of jazz music including traditional, mainstream and modern. Information on local jazz events will continue to get airtime, and the show can be heard on 97.2FM stereo.

## Machine Room Opens

A NEW CLUB under the title 'The Machine Room' opens its doors in December at the LMC premises at 42 Gloucester Avenue, NW1. We are informed that avant-punk-funk-jazz is the speciality, sounds decent. First gigs are Lol Coxhill, The Records and Mayhem Quartet (7 Dec) and Research, The Doornicks and Mark Hewins (21).

## State Of The Art

A NEW EXHIBITION of jazz images appeared recently at London's Bass Clef. The images are essentially photographs by Uta Bouandy, 'transformed' using airbrush, coloured inks, pastels and coloured pencils by Vick Barber, who is a lecturer in Art and Craft. Such jazz notables in the exhibition include our own best dressed man, Lol Coxhill, Maggie Nicols, Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Gerry Mulligan, Mervyn Africa and a host of others. Samples from the exhibition can be obtained in the form of photos or any venues interested in housing the exhibits throughout the country should call Vick Barber on (01) 249 7221 x63 for more details.

## Back to Basics

A JAZZ COURSE run by Clanges In Jazz will take place on January 24th and 25th (venue TBC). Intended for those who are beginning to grapple with the basics of jazz harmony and improvisation, to begin a systematic study. Includes the basics of functional harmony alongside Roman Numeral analysis. This will also be an opportunity for ear training as all harmonic principles under discussion will be generated by analysing tunes (including some standards). The cost is £50, and details of the venue and booking can be obtained from (01) 444 1594.

## Bracknell Radio

A SERIES of Radio 3 programmes recorded at the 1986 Bracknell Festival opens on 10 January. Broadcast time is 10.40 pm on Saturday evenings and the first four programmes feature Nu (10 Jan), Forward Motion (17), Third Kind Of Blue (24) and John Stevens' Freebop (31). Each edition will be introduced by R.D. Cook.

## Brass with Rutherford

COMMUNITY MUSIC LTD are holding a brass workshop with Paul Rutherford on Saturday 13th December at The Drill Hall, 16 Cheries Street, WC1. Price is £6/£3 concessions. For a booking form ring (01) 700 4780. Participants will be working on instrumental techniques and improvisation.

## Musicworks

A BRAND NEW MUSIC project opened in Stockwell, South London in November. Designed to allow musicians to learn to play together, Musicworks has been set up by Gail Thompson, acclaimed London sax player, in association with Community Music, the Islington-based music service. The philosophy behind the project is to give people the chance to learn about musicmaking in all its aspects - from picking up an instrument to signing a contract and cutting a disc.

Members will be able to come to cheap classes and workshops in specific instruments or musical styles and have the chance to meet other musicians - to exchange ideas and play together. If you are interested in Musicworks as a project worker or as a member, phone (01) 737 6103. All players of all standards are welcome.

## Student Swing

EMEX STUDENT MUSIC SOCIETY have now started their second year of promoting jazz and improvised music. Past concerts have included Evan Parker, Derek Bailey and Courtney Pine. ESMS are looking for individuals or bands interested in appearing at the university, so whether you are a new band or internationally famous (!) contact Steven Sincok, 80 St Cyrus Rd, Colchester, Essex for more information.

## Tommy Goes To Hollywood?

WE ARE AMAZED to hear of boss drummer Tommy Chase buying records in the company of renowned pop producer Trevor Horn - searching for 'a jazz drum sound'. Will the former Frankie mixmaster be producing the next Chase LP? We await further revelations!

## Palm Court Jazz

A CONCEPT in jazz entertainment in the USA is taking place from November til March '87. 'Jazz In The Palm Court' is organised as a 90-minute bi-weekly repertory series inviting local and national jazz artists to explore the repertoire of celebrated and obscure jazz players who were pivotal to the evolution of the genre. In addition to enriching their own development as musicians the series also seeks to provide the scholars of American music history with a new way through which to investigate jazz history. For the visiting public, it is an afternoon of jazz music performed in a historical context, supported by printed and oral commentary. Jazz In The Palm Court will be held on the first and third Sundays of each month, from Nov '86 to March '87. The performances will take place in the Palm Court at the National Museum of American History, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, Washington DC. All programmes begin at 3pm, and are free. Seemingly a great idea and something we could well do with over here, but in the meantime anyone in Washington at the time - it's well worth a visit.

## Jaws No More

AS WE APPROACH press time we learn of the death of the great tenorman Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis, of cancer, at the age of 65. A full appreciation will appear in our next issue.

## Community Happenings

COMMUNITY MUSIC are holding their own benefit for the late bassist Johnny Dyani at London's Albany Empire on December 19th. From 9pm-3am the show features Team Ten, Blackjazz Orchestra, Jah Revelationmusik, Take 5 and The Jiving Lindy Hoppers. Tickets are £5 and all proceeds go to the family of Dyani.

Whilst on the subject, Community Music has recently moved headquarters to 1, Hoxton Sq, London N1, which is also home of The Bass Clef. As yet there is no phone but they can still be reached regarding all their forthcoming happenings on (01) 700 4780.

In January '87 they're holding a series of courses. *First Steps* is a chance for absolute beginners to get cheap musical tuition from professional musicians. *Mobile Music* will be a touring team running mixed ability workshops using John Stevens' methods ("Search and Reflect") in schools and community centres, initially in the London area. *Do It Now* is a fully comprehensive Community Music information service and membership scheme will help in all aspects of making music, from choosing an instrument to going into the studio. For further info on all these goings-on call the above number.

## Omission

APPOLOGIES ARE in order for some reference credits we omitted from last month's article on British Beatniks. Source material was culled from the following.

"Life Among The Beatniks", Paul O'Neil, *Reader's Digest* 1960.

"What Gives With The Beatniks?", Alex Atkinson, *Punch* August 1960.

*London And The Single Girl*, Betty James, Batsford.



FOLLOWING THE amicable departure of drummer Josefina Cupido, The Guest Stars have replaced her with a male person, Cliff Venner! The collective voice for the band says, "A lot of people are really shocked, but Cliff has stood in for Jose in the past and was the obvious choice. Actually the most surprised reaction we got was from Richard Cook(!), but we hope people will appreciate our new optimism and enthusiasm, which is far more important than this 'sex-change' drama."

Catch The Guest Stars at Ronnie's in the first week of December and London's Bass Clef on December 23rd.

## Radio Without End

ATTENTIVE LISTENERS to Brian Priestley's *All That Jazz* on radio London will already have noted Brian's new time in the schedules. He now goes out from eight till ten each Tuesday evening, immediately before Gilles P's show - giving Londoners four solid hours of radio jazz. A special feature of Brian's December programmes will be material recorded at some of this year's live events. Dick Morrissey & Kathy Stobart (2

Dec), Bobby Bradford & John Stevens (9), Elvin Jones/Albert Mangelsdorff/John Surman/Dave Holland (16) and Loose Tubes (23).

## Yorkshire Course

ANOTHER COURSE, this time in Sheffield, at Wortley Hall, on 29th and 30th November. The cost is £30, waged; £20 unwaged. Details can be obtained from Harfield Jazz Workshops, 130 Broomspring Lane, Sheffield, S10 2FD.

## Johnny Dyani

ON DECEMBER 20th, a benefit at London's 100 Club for Johnny Dyani takes place. Featuring Chris MacGregor, Dudu Pukwana, Lewis Mahanah, Viva La Black and John Stevens Trio, the benefit hopes to raise money for a decent burial in his homeland. Any financial contributions should be made to The Johnny Dyani Memorial Fund, Nat West bank, account no. 04312309, 1, Long Acre, London WC2.

# Alle Ist Gut

THE WORD FROM MUNICH

FOR YEARS, MUNICH HAS been a hole on the improviser's map. Lots of record labels peddling US jazz, no local scene. This imbalance is changing, slowly, thanks largely to the efforts of Kalle Laar, a terrific young guitarist busily shepherding Bavarian players towards improvising excellence. He has that special catalyst's energy that John Stevens brought to the Little Theatre Club way back when, or Stanley Crouch to the short-lived NY "Loft Scene". As to whether comparable musicians will emerge from the Tape Theatre, the cathedral-sized wood-beamed concrete warehouse that's home to Laar and his partner, English playwright/drummer Colin Gilder... who knows?

If not, it won't be for want of trying. And Kalle himself is already exceptional. In time, he'll be seen as part of the pantheon that includes Bailey, Sharrock, Kaiser, Chudbourne and co. He's studied the lot, largely via records, and will give you a spontaneous dissertation on Bailey's *Ando* or Kaiser's collaborations with Sun Wong Park at the drop of a bar. But still he's his own man, largely as a result of five years spent refining techniques in a unique circumstance. Almost in private, you could say.

Until the spring of 1986, Laar functioned exclusively as a sort of living soundtrack to Colin Gilder's plays. I'm at a loss to know how to describe them... try and imagine a shoestring hybrid of the old Black Mountain College "happenings" and Robert Wilson's Theatre Of Visions, imbued with a scatological sense of humour and a large dollop of shamanism. The shaman-obsession, despite some reasonable Western self-consciousness, led Gilder to the drums. Now at the grand old age of 36, he's surprised himself by becoming quite a useful free jazz drummer, a role that was never in the career plan.

Filling the large space of the Tape Theatre and the long silences between the often minimal action of the plays, Laar evolved what amounts to a sculptural approach to sound, and a sense of The Big Picture, uncommon among improvisation's detail fetishists.

This sensitivity has been welcomed by distinguished visitors to Tape. Among them the controversial painter A.R. Penck, himself a tolerable drummer, and a cunning marketing man. His albums - Laar appears on one of them, alongside the Billy Bang, Frank Lowe gang - are issued in signed limited editions with a print for a cover and retail for about sixty quid a throw. Then there's Burch Morris, the great cornetist/conductor who was virtually resident at Tape last summer, in between European Festival commitments. Perhaps the highlight of the year here was an improvised quartet with Burch, Kalle, Wayne Horvitz (synth etc) and J.A. Dease (electric trombone, drums). Morris also guested with a duo of



KALLE

LAAR

WITH

COLIN

GILDER

ON

DRUMS

Laar and trumpeter Markus Stockhausen

The inevitable outcome of Kalle's inherently orchestral bent has been the development of the Tape Improvisers Ensemble, at present a nine-piece band of wide-ranging instrumental competence. Its outstanding soloist is Abbie Connor, herself an American composer of note, currently holding down the trombone chair in the Munich Philharmonic. An inventive and subtle improviser. Some others in the band are finding their feet, led gently by Laar or provoked by Gilder (cymbals slicing through the air).

Ensemble multi-sax man Wolfgang Mesch is also making headway and has recently coerced Kalle into his own group, a harmolodic boogie band called Tour De Force. Their mucous, enjoyable sets at the Domicile (Munich's raty answer to Ronnie's) would have caused Pinski Zoo to recognise soul mates with a cheer.

At the Tape Theatre, life goes on. Kalle Laar is again playing the role of one-man-band for Gilder's latest anti-play *The Airties And The Babyp*. While a black-clad dancer paces around, turns the lights on and off and twirls a few pretty piroettes, and while the author mumbles to himself, chucks dildoes at stacks of tin cans and reads texts on the meaning of improvisation, Kalle - with a resourcefulness positively heroic - scribbles around half a dozen guitars and prepared guitars, drum machine, synthesiser, turntables, darbouka and a zither/loot thing. Generally sounding like at least three people.

Munich's best.

No competition.

Steve Lake





NOW'S THE TIME

## Czechs Under Pressure

CATS IN PERIL



police confiscated some 800 books and several hundred magazines from the jazz section premises which they then sealed.

Since its foundation in 1971, the jazz section has been a focus for independent cultural activity in Czechoslovakia and the authorities have been attempting to disband it and curtail its activities. The jazz section considers itself to be part of the European Nuclear disarmament movement, which probably has contributed to the undue attention.

In a letter to the President of the Republic, three wives of the detained committee members say: "The men being persecuted in this way are people of great dedication and personal courage, who have devoted most of their spare time and an enormous amount of energy to socially beneficial activities. These activities have met, totally incomprehensibly, with countless obstructions. Instead of official appreciation, this voluntary and wholly unselfish work was rewarded with official persecution ranging from interrogation, house searching, job dismissals and harassment."

END (European Nuclear Disarmament) are asking that people support the jazz section and its arrested members by sending protest letters to the following addresses:

DR GUSTAV HUSAK,  
President of the Czechoslovak  
Socialist Republic,  
11 908 PRAHA Hrad  
Czechoslovakia

Ministry of Culture of the CSSR  
DR MILAN KLIMAK,  
Wallenstein Palace,  
PRAGA,  
Czechoslovakia

This is for the sake of freedom for the people of the East, that they may enjoy music, and in particular jazz, as we do in the West, without the pressures of harassment, violence and intimidation.

Jayne Houghton



## Johnny Dyani

1945 - 1986

Johnny M'Bizo Dyani, bassist with The Blue Notes, died after playing a gig on the week of October 26th. Dyani apparently collapsed immediately after coming off stage, and died two days later in hospital, of suspected liver failure and severe haemorrhaging. A post mortem was being carried out at the time of going to press. Dyani, born 30 November 1945, came over to Britain from South Africa 20 years ago to play with The Blue Notes, and has been here ever since, playing with such notables as John Stevens, Bobby Bradford, Joseph Jarman, David Murray and Don Cherry. One of his last major appearances here was at this summer's Bracknell Festival, with Bradford and Stevens. He was married and his oldest son, Thomas, is also a musician, playing congas for a band in Copenhagen. Money is currently being raised to send Dyani's body back to his homeland.

## ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS "O n e

BY BIBA KOPF should always

be a little bit mosaic," said the Austrian writer Konrad Bayer. A suicide at 32, some might consider him a poor guide to good living. But his principle holds true. After all, one is not so much a single entity as a composite of myriad myths and memories. The successful life is the one who constructs the mosaic of his or her own mosaic, so to speak. As most are content to slot their lives into pre-existing mosaics, such

exemplars are rare. Yet in the margins of popular music there are still a few willing to plough across the given patterns, forcibly realigning them according to their own designs. Of the few none is more exemplary than the Hamburger HOLGER HILLER. His compositional technique begins from the commonplace premise that nothing is new, everything has been done to death before. So it is now up

to the composer to organise the mass of "readymade" material into as original a shape as possible. But where the majority of those picking over the past expend their energy in coveting their tracks, leaving no traces of worlds gone under, Hiller actively seeks to expose those worlds. He montages or melds the various resonances released by them, sometimes with a view to creating jarringly dissonant passages, elsewhere in the interest of breathtaking harmonic arrangements of seemingly irreconcilable fragments. On his second solo LP *Open In Euk/Up In The Corner* (Mute, licensed from Hiller's Japanese patrons at Wave Records, Tokyo) he has sampled the early electronic compositions of the severely misunderstood Edgard Varèse and paired them with the whorish commercial come-ons of Scritti Politti's drum sound. Whole orchestras are compacted into solitary molecules of noise from which pieces are constructed. Of course, all this genetic engineering of the stuff of music would mean nothing if the resulting mutations of emulator-sound were made to dance to well-worn tunes. Here is where Hiller comes into his own. Working with the Japanese popstar/arranger Izumi "Mimi" Kobayashi, they together marshal their freshly minted elements through a sequence of figures recalling Varèse and, by association, early Frank Zappa. (It might be useful to note the record's Japanese title is *Hyperprior* – after Varèse's composition for brass and percussion.) If at first one cannot see the picture for the dazzle of different colour and textures of the stones gone into the mosaic's making, it comes into clearer focus with repeated viewings. Just so Holger Hiller's "musicals".



## THE SOUND OF AFRICA Accessibility:

BY MARK SINKER not a

W're word, I guess. Strange economies of resistance build up round its construction. A double compilation *African Means* (Stems) features a song each from SOMO SOMO, TABU LAY, MBILIA BEL, DAUODA, EBENEZER OBEY, SEGUN ADEWALE, THE AFRICAN BROTHERS, HILIFE INTERNATIONAL and MOHAMMED MALLOUM BEN (that's to say Soukous, Jupi

and Highlife from Zaire, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Ghana, London as well). It's light listening, attractive in its variety, but not, for the same reason, trawling very deep or wide into any one style. An excellent place to start . . . but a likely place for some to stick, if they prefer comfort to more demanding pleasures.

Moving much further in on Highlife means moving in on its earliest and greatest exponents: *All For You* (RetroAfrica) collects E.T. MENSAH's 78s from the early 50s, when Highlife was little more than one man and his guitar, and shows close musical – and social – resemblance to Calypso. Accessibility here is in a presence so gentle and simple that it would be easy to underestimate this music. JOHN COLLINS paints in some background with E.T. Mensah, *King Of Highlife* (Off The Record Press, £2.95, 116 Whitefield Street, W1P 5RW); in a way, it's a pretty hard read, because Collins knows his field (Ghana, and West African music) so well that he has problems reaching out to those outside it – but it's not such a handicap as it was in his disastrous introduction to African Pop that appeared last year, where his specialist enthusiasm had to combine with a very limited knowledge of music out in the wider world, as well as a peculiarly random delivery of facts. As if they were packed out of order for space. No, this ought to go some way to restoring his substantial reputation.

The slow move into wider fascination with a moorish sound continues (though that adjective is as hopeless as any of the others: Islamic won't do, because OHRA HAZA is Yemenite Jewish, North African and Arab fail to reach up as far as the s MUSTAPHAS s and their Balkan resource, or East to Armenia and the soundtracks to SERGO PARADJANOV's mysterious films *The Colour of Pomegranates* and *The Legend Of Shiraz Fortuna*, and Oriental will hardly include an ancient record on Lyricchord, *Mindawo Mittera* – *What Is The Unknown?* of Ethiopian and Urban Tribal music). Algeria is presently attempting to tame their very own ELVIS figure, one CHEB KHALED, by pushing him through national service. His record, *Hada Rayban* (Triple Earth), is Rai music: which subsists on pulses of eclectic guitar and synth-throb, chewing on brittle traditional percussion, and breaking into a long passionate rebel (microtonal) yell when Khalel starts up. He sings "Hey Mama, your daughter, she wants me, she wants me." The moral order frowns. And that's the nearest way to accessibility so far today, or any day, these days.



## IN A LATIN GROOVE Quote of the

BY SUE STEWARD Latin and

other non-British grooves go comes from BRIAN PARSONS in the BONGO GO! *TROPICAL DISCO MANIFESTO* (a disco manifesto?), when he wrote: "As with football and cricket, so too music, us Brits are beginning to wise up to the fact that we are not the centre of the musical universe. Others elsewhere are playing music as good and often much better than 'our own' (sic). Unfortunately the media . . . remain totally ignorant of popular music from outside Britain and the USA."

I have to add that that applies to many kinds of music within the UK too, as years of bitter complaints from black musicians – and not yet aired complaints from Asian bands – bear witness. Of all the media, the national papers particularly and radio and tv especially are ignorant, narrow-minded, chauvinistic. Non-"ethnic" DJs like JOHN PEE, CHARLIE GILLET and recently ANDY KERSHAW, therefore, stand out.



The so-called Community Radio stations would have begun to redress the balance had the government not so brutally reneged on their plans. But there's an irony here. 1986 has been The Year of rap and of jazz, of dreadlocked women, and slick young men and women (solid soul audiences) who have become fashion icons. And rap is used to sell everything from soft drinks to soaps. Does

that mean black artists get a proportionately bigger slice of the cake? And what happens next as fads fade? The non-British music that concerns this column most – salsa, Latin jazz, Latin music, call it what you will – is a burgeoning underground secret. Media folks are beginning to twig, though they must amend their pronunciation from 'seltzer' first but the following horror story about WILLIE COLON's experience with the *Solid Soul* producers is a chilling indicator of how misunderstood Latin music is today (except by fans) and the real obstacles it will face as it flies closer to the charts here. Colon's single "Set Me On Fire" was sailing on the charts; he was invited to sing (mime) on the programme, only to be met with a set of demands for himself and band which probably pre-dated his first hit as a teen-star in the 1960s. Stereotypes of Latin performers. Colon rightly walked out to a cab to Heathrow, turning down a chance of national exposure for his record. The thing is, you see, salsa doesn't need England and its audiences. It wants us – and is overjoyed by the reaction – but they don't need us because salsa is already an established universe, a multi-million-dollar enterprise. Willie Colon flies a *Lear Jet*, for Christ's sake.

As the disappointment about the radio stations' meltdown dies away, the Pirates have come out of their burrows to snuff the air and erect their aerials again. And this time round Londoners are treated to two salsa shows. To'Mek comes in with ARACATACA! on WBL (88.5FM) at the peaktime Saturday nights 11-1 and also runs his club of that name on Thursdays in CINICITIA, Welbeck Street, London W1, 9-3. Out of the ashes of Solar's Soul Station comes TKO (90.5FM) and the Bass Clef's DOMINIQUE has Tues.

8-10 which is a nice companion slot to GILLES PETERSON's Radio London Jazz. Dominique also starts a spot in the posher confines of Mayfair's DOVER STREET WINE BAR on Weds. while the veteran founder of the SOL Y SOMBRER DANCE DIVE DAVE HUCKER has landed himself in DRUMMONDS WINE BAR, opposite St Pancras station on Thursdays, for an evening tuned to the world's airwaves.

I tried not to mention Baz this month, but now he tells me that not only will he be hanging his Xmas stocking on a Tokyo hotel bed end during a 3-week dj-ing stint there, but he returns to the launch of his first compilation for Charly records DANCE LATIN which includes some favourites from his dj-ing Repertoire, including "MAMBOHIT", JOE LOSS's version of "TEQUILA" (I can't resist an exclamation mark), EDIE KANO, WILLIE RODRIGUEZ, boogaloes, etc.

As the year creeps to an end thanks to all the risk-takers and believers who've brought us Latin music, live and on record.

## CLUBLAND JIVE

After the SOHO JAZZ FESTIVAL when London was a

BY LYN CHAMPION

living mass of tiny jazz cells, what's become of the young jazz warriors, roaming the streets in a jazz-haunted, desire-tormented frenzy? (where have I heard that before? – Ed.)

Apart from a few jazzy tunes at the few unbustled Warehouse Parties, the West End is a flood of sharp haircuts, hungry for somewhere else to go. ANDY MCCONNELL's turned WISPER into a last stop SOUL STATION for the growing crowds of Jazz B-girls and boys that are currently trying to dance in shoe-box jazz bars around

Soho. At CLOWNS, the CUTTING EDGE duo DANNY and TIM have squeezed in a PA, where usually the sound has to come through ventilation shafts from elsewhere. But size is not important, because the big venues are as packed as the small dives and JAZZ BOP's at the TOWN AND COUNTRY is likely to find hundreds of kads... wild for the subservient beats... busting the doors to get in, like they did at JB2.

MUNKHERRY's are starting the week with some raw dance jazz alternating with vintage soul and funk, and as the heat of the dance jazz circuit builds up on dancefloors, behind the decks it's INTENSE. The jazz scene is hot with EGO-FRICTION... and it's getting SERIOUS out there. Obviously outside the boundaries of accepted morality and definitely no life for a Virgin; at all.

But what goes on in the suburbs? Back for the first time since he came with MACHITO in '81, CHOCOLATE ARMENTEROS, Latin trumpet supremo, will be down at the Bass Clef until the 13th. MAMBO MADNESS at the Bull in Sheen on the 20th finds GILES P and BANGSY staying loyal to a different type of crowd, and WILBS, reaching past SOHO to the whole city is the newest ALL-STAR COMMAND RADIO station in the Capital. As part of an outrageous line-up of across the board dancefloor slots, tune in to a slice of jazz from CHRIS KING and TOMEK on Saturdays, PM on 88.5FM.

Meanwhile, the monthly BRAZILIAN parties usually at BIGGLES wine bar culminated in a bigger bang at BUZZBY's organised by Brazilian Contemporary Arts whose quest is to restate Latin American culture. Part of the lead up to the BRAZILIAN CARNIVAL in Feb at the Albert Hall. London-based Latinas MATRACA drummed out some soft-

edged very unstreet SAMBA, followed by 10 versions of TODO MENINA BAHIANA... or three versions repeated three and a bit times. GEORGIE FAME got to explain his current interest in Brazilian music as the GILBERTO GIL version drowned him out behind. George was clearly knocked off course, but after a bout of dancing girls, and the 90th TODO MENINA BAHIANA came an unashamed dose of LATIN EURO-POP. Fast, furious but curious. Best left to NEW FACES... it made me yearn for the return of those Brazilian blues sessions at Smethy's and their raw percussive sound which would've cut through all that heavy restraint like an acid bath.

Speaking of which, keep an eye on BATH later this month. JAZZ NIGHT in the ROMAN BATHS PUMP ROOM is reputed to be likely to steam.



## Fables from the Tables



BIG JOHN

BY GILLES PETERSON

IS IT ME, or are more people smiling in clubs these days? I do actually believe that the message of 'Let's have fun' is getting through to a few! The vinyl being played in the clubs has headed in a less serious direction too. The *Latin Boogaloo* and *The Baptist Organ Band* could hardly be described as the most serious cousins of jazz, but the likes of Big John

Patton, Jimmy Smith, Willie Bobo and Johnny Zamot have created a new bridge crossing popular music into jazz.

Album-wise, the compilation still seems to be the most attractive offer. *Women, Whisky And Wailin'* on Charly records hits a jazz R & B groove with such floor shakers as 'South Shore Drive' by Paul Williams, while Boots Brown and The Blockbusters has found itself on *Jazz Jive 4* with 'Cerveza' alongside Bonfa and Brazil doing 'Hitting The Road Jack' and 'Minor Chant' by Lonnie Smith. One album to look forward to in January will be *Dance Latin*, also on Charly and boasting Candido's 'Mamba Inn', Eddie Cano with 'Wack Wack' and 'La Bamba', Clark Terry selling 'Peanuts', 'Cici Nova' by Bill Doggett, Quartette Tres Bien's 'Boss Tres Bien' and another version of 'Tequila', this time by Joe Loss.

New imports of note include singer Mark Murphy's last album for Muse before joining Fantasy in '87. 'Living Room' has lots of organ and guitar grooves and a fabulous version of 'Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens'. Vibes man Terry Gibbs does a *daya* in of the 50s with Tito Puente and ex-Machito altoist Frank Morgan on the uptempo *Latin Connection* (Contemporary). Snappy renditions of 'Groovin' High' and 'Sing Sing Sing' may excite!

Flora Purim and Aitte's debut for the new Crossover label (via Concoche Jazz) is a disappointing rock thing with only the ballads doing anything vital.

### CLUB GROOVES

JOHNNY ZAMOT Baby Bring It To Me (Decca)  
THE DELGATES Pigmy (Pacific Jazz)  
LOU DONALSON Rev Moses (Blue Note)  
LOU DONALSON Turtle Wax (Blue Note)  
LES MCANN LIMITED Hey Leroy (Limelite)  
WILLIE BOBO Boogaloo in Room 802 (Verve)  
MARK III Trio Go On (Wingate)  
RUSTY BRYANT Alabama Kid (Prestige)  
CARLOS MALCOM Play It For The World (AJP)  
CHARLES EARLAND Spinky (Prestige)

### CURRENT GROOVES

MARK MURPHY Living Room (Muse)  
HANK MOBLEY Straight No Filter (Blue Note)  
ORQUESTA A CONNEXION LATINA Un Poco Loco (Enja)  
ALVIN QUEEN Jammin' Uptown (Nirva)  
BEN SIDRAN On The Live Side (Magenta)  
YANA PURIM Distant Love (Pausa)  
BRANFORD MARSALIS Royal Garden Blues (Columbia)  
TERRY GIBBS Latin Connection (Contemporary)  
MILES DAVIS Tutu (WEA)  
WYNTON MARSALIS J. Mood (CBS)

## Club Dates

### London

#### BASS CLEF

(4th) John Etheridge Quartet  
(5th) Sonido De Londres  
(7th) Elaine Delmar  
(9-13th) Alfredo Chocolate Armenteros  
(17th) Jazz supergroup with Mike Carr, Dick Morrissey, Jim Mullen, Bill Eyden  
(20th) African Culture special Xmas party  
(28th) Meantime  
\*Big bands every Sunday lunchtime

(31st) New Years Eve Special  
Dudu Pukwana's Zila  
(11th Jan) Tommy Smith Quartet

#### BARBICAN CENTRE

Daily lunchtime free jazz

#### 100 CLUB

(12th) Geno Washington  
(13th) Pete Thomas Deep Sea Jivers  
(20th) Alex Welsh Reunion Band

(21st) Bob Kerr's Xmas party  
LMC

(20th Dec) Paul Dunmall band  
(10th Jan) Evan Parker

#### RONNIE SCOTT'S

(1-6th Dec) Guest Stars with Dick Morrissey  
(8th Dec-3rd Jan) George Melly with Ronnie Scott

#### SEVEN DIALS JAZZ CLUB

(2nd) Neon Lighthouse  
(9th) Stan Tracey Quintet  
(16th) Gail Thompson's Gail Force

BURY ST EDMUNDS Theatre  
Royal

(29th Nov) George Melly  
COLCHESTER L'Aristos

(8th Dec) Courtney Pine  
BRACKNELL South Hill Park  
(2nd Dec) L.C.Q.

(9th) Pete Allen's Celler Bar Five

(16th) Lennie Best Quartet with Kathy Stobart

(23rd) Christmas Jazz Party  
LEEDS Coconut Grove

(3rd Dec) Louis Stewart  
NOTTINGHAM Old Vic

(3rd Dec) Pete King Quintet  
(10th) Terry Smith

(21st) Trevor Watts  
(23rd) Xmas Party with Lindsay Cooper trio & Westbrook  
(28th) Louis Moholo's Viva La Black  
(30th) Brian Abrahams Quartet

CARLISLE Front Page  
(5) Danny Boys  
(6) The Atlantics  
(12) The Skywalkers  
(13) Hang The Dance  
(19) Jazawaki  
(20) Johnny Jumps The Bandwagon

(23) Blues Burglars  
(27) Fifth Of Heaven  
(29) 21 Strangers

CARDIFF Four Bars Inn  
(4) Clark Tracey

(5/6) Louis Stewart  
(7) Dick Hamer Quartet

(8) Welsh Jazz Orchestra  
(12) Q

(15) Al Grey & Buddy Tate  
(18) Cumulus

(19) District Six  
CARDIFF Gibbs

(5) Rod Kelly Quartet  
(6) Tina May Quintet

(9) Jonathan Lewis Quartet  
(11/12) Stan Tracey Quartet

(18) Richie Clark Quartet  
CONWAY (N. Wales)

Wheelhouse  
(4) Louis Stewart

(11) Trefor Owen Quartet  
(19) Moody's Mood

SWANSEA Tim Mullen's  
(1) Clark Tracey

(8) John Ham Quartet  
(15) District Six

(22) Keith & Maria  
Pendlebury

SOUTHSEA The Cambridge  
(8) Buddy Tate

BRACKNELL South Hill Park  
(13 Jan) Episteme

BRISTOL Amolfi  
(15 Jan) Episteme

(17 Jan) Episteme  
BRISTOL Moon Club

(4 Dec) Tink O Jazz  
(11) Pete Hurt Quartet

(18) District Six  
EXETER Art Centre

(13) District Six  
PLYMOUTH Jazz Club

(15) Xmas party with Tony Harris Band



# BE Bop!



For further information: Blue Note 20 Manchester Square London W1. Also available Blue Boxx.



DEXTER GORDON

## Our Man in Bebop

TEXT: MIKE ZWERIN

PHOTOGRAPHY: HERMAN LEONARD

THE LONG TALL TENOR OF *ROUND MIDNIGHT* TALKS ABOUT THE MOVIE THAT IS HIS LIFE.

WITH HIS PHOTOGENIC six-foot-five-inch frame, mobile face, bedroom eyes and cool, deliberate moves, "Long-Tall" Dexter

Gordon—the link between Lester Young and John Coltrane—was called "the best non-professional actor I've ever seen" by Woody

Allen.

He plays Dale Turner, a composite of Young and Bud Powell, in Bertrand

Tavernier's *Round Midnight*, now playing in

London. Turner is a

burned-out tenor-saxophone hero who comes to Paris at the end of his career to "find himself".

The friendship of a French

fan (François Cluzet) renews faith, hope and

creative energy. Herbie

Hancock, Bobby

Hutcherson and other

musicians play musicians.

Most are black but there

are no racial stereotypes.

Ron Carter told Tavernier:

"It took a Frenchman to make the first film about our culture."

Long-Tall was the prototype bebop tenorman, in fact he was the first to transpose Bird from the alto. His fat, resonant sound was eloquent, elegant, unmistakable. Like Trane a decade later, it was difficult for a jazz musician to escape his influence in the late 40s and early 50s. He was also the prototype hipster—with all those "cool" verbal, physical and psychic moves, positive and negative.

This is his second dramatic role. In 1960, when he joined the California company of Jack Gelber's play *The Connection*, about junkies—after having kicked a heroin habit of his own—he took some acting lessons from Martin Landau. Recently he discovered that Jack Nicholson had been in the same class. "I learned how to stand like a tree, and how to scream," he said, standing up and stretching with a silent open mouth in his palace-hotel Crillon suite. (Parenthetically, this classic bebopper with the cool body-language checked into the lush Crillon is one of life's more agreeable ironies.) Richard Burton is his favourite actor because, "He had a voice like a tenor saxophone," and George Sanders is "sort of my model. He's so fastidious, debonair, kind of like the ultimate master rogue."

A roughish wunk interrupts Dale Turner's ironic grin, not quite a smirk. Slow, flowing hands punctuate ballad sentences. He is constantly distracted, the essence of alienation. Short silent shots of Turner sitting and staring at strange hotel-room wallpaper illustrate the lonely road. He opens his mouth to say something... no hurry here. Is it indifference? Lack of lucidity? Frustration? Fear is not far. Like any honest improviser (Tavernier says no two takes were the same), he's lived on the

edge. Will Dale fall off? Will Dexter hold on?

Though the film is maybe 20 minutes too long, with some structural problems, Gordon's pride, grace and timing are so intense, direction so full of love and purpose, the story so honest and emotional that such faults become quibbles.

SHOOTING WAS TOUGH. Gordon, who is 63, has been ill with diabetes and other complaints. The occasional double-espresso with two sugars and a shot of brandy before the first take did not help. The music was recorded live, machinery noise precluded air conditioning, and July 1985 was hot in Paris. Dexter was coppin' occasional Zs by noon, and he says his acupuncturist should get a screen credit.

His father, a doctor in Los Angeles whose parents included Lionel Hampton and Duke Ellington, had played clarinet through medical school. He taught his son the rudiments. Dexter cut school to listen to Count Basie. He quit school at 17 to join Lionel Hampton on tour. After stints with Fletcher Henderson and Louis Armstrong, he recorded the classics "Second Balcony Jump" with Billy Eckstine, "Blue 'n' Boogie" with Dizzy Gillespie and later "The Chase", a monster tenor duel with Wardell Gray.

Personal problems and the decline of jazz led to long periods of unemployment, but there was no intent to emigrate. After a month in Ronnie Scott's in 1962, one thing just led to another for 14 years. There was a Paris period, and then Copenhagen became home base. He calls his relationship with that city "a spontaneous love affair". Paper

CONTINUED ON PAGE 79

## Victoriaville Festival

QUEBEC  
VICTORIAVILLE

THE IDEA of a major music festival in a small town, relatively commonplace on the European circuit, is rare in Canada. There is, in fact, just this one event, held in its fourth year for five, cool autumn days in a French, economically-troubled community of some 30,000 in the Bois-Francs ("hard wood") region some 140 km east, north-east of Montreal. To make matters rarer, it was the most visionary festival of the entire Canadian season of 1986, whatever the locals' understanding of what was going on in their midst.

The FIMAV in fact represents a new sociological guild in Victoriaville: its organisers, headed by former forerunner Michel Levasseur, see it as one of many steps toward the more general reevaluation of the area. Levasseur is quick to point out that the festival is really for the diffusion of the music, though a music no more economically advantaged in its own way than this particular Quebec community.

Visiting musicians were drawing comparisons to Miles and Willisau, but the Victoriaville festival has its own personality – its own intimacy and informality. Attendance for the ticketed concerts (including the Rova Saxophone Quartet, A Little Westbrook Music, the Semantics, David Moss' Dense Band, Anthony Braxton and Derek Bailey, Johnny Dyani, Ralph Towner and Gary Bur-

ton, Cassiber and the Last Poets) and for the free, in-school presentations, some 30 performances altogether, apparently neared 10,000, yet never was there a sense of a crowd.

The festival began with an evening of music by Quebec performers – by Denis Hébert, whose 13-piece orchestra (reeds, strings, percussion) played minimalist compositions shy on melodic interest and coloured just lightly by Hébert's third-world references, and by Marcelle Deschênes, who contributed a dramatic electro-acoustic score to the dazzling multi-collaborator, multi-media work *Lux*.

Rova and the Westbrook shared night two, an evening of contrasts, what with the San Francisco quartet's intense, strenuous performance of new saxophone music and the British trio's vivacious presentation from the pop/art song domain.

Evening three, a fascinating night of strum and clang, was given over to New York musicians, *The Semantics* and *The Dense Band*. The former, a hard-edged trio that begins where the haterolodic bands leave off, had Elliott Sharp as its focal point, his two-handed, "twin-neck, guitar-bass work – more like an "out" Eddie Van Halen than an "out" Stanley Jordan in its roar of overtones and feedback – and his inexplicable, keening vocals rendered quite conventional the playing of reedman Ned Rothenberg and drummer Sam Bennett. The drummer's closing solo, half acoustic and half synthesised, was a fine piece of work, and the trio generally left a lot of interest-

ing ideas behind to be filed, sorted and edited at some future point.

David Moss is a kind of New Music David Lee Roth, a larger-than-life figure who drums up a brisk, kinetic clatter, sings in a language of his own, and this time left the details to Wayne Horvitz (synthesiser), Christian Marclay (turntables) and guitarists Fred Frith and Bill Frisell. The Frith-Frisell match might have been interesting had Frisell been a stringer presence; his linear swells, fades and shadows ran counter to the generally staccato construction of the Dense Band's music. On the other hand, it probably would have been a lot thinner without him. Moss kept his tunes short and to the point, his music would have stood out at Victoriaville on brevity alone.

Frith, who has become something of a local hero in Victoriaville for his annual appearances at the festival, returned the following afternoon with the Montreal guitarist René Lussier and various guests in a concert recorded for future release by the festival.

Reedman Anthony Braxton and guitarist Derek Bailey opened the festival's *soirée jazz* that same evening with a long, sustained, conversational piece in which each spoke with their characteristically personal emotion and logic. In its concision and focus, the improvisation set in relief the discursive nature of many of the festival's other adventures. Bassist Johnny Dyani's multi-national quintet (Harry Beckett, trumpet, John Tchicai, tenor saxophone, Pierre Duerge, guitar; Makaya Nshoko, drums) took a long

time to follow, and still longer to get rolling.

The final night, which saw the small, quiet wonders of guitarist Ralph Towner and vibraphonist Gary Burton somewhat dwarfed in the large, quiet wonder of the Eglise Ste-Victoire, offered the most unlikely double bill of all at the Grand Café, combining the German trio Cassiber with New York's Last Poets, each a passionate exponent of their respective musical schools. From Cassiber, a richly resourceful performance of avant rock, often romantic in its stylistic sweep and grand emotions; from the Last Poets, who proclaimed "We were rappin' while they were nappin'," a reaffirmation of the street roots of a new highly-styled pop music.

Both ensembles seemed a little dated in these dispassionate times, but their mere presence in Victoriaville – Cassiber for its only North American appearance – signalled the depth and range of this unique and increasingly valued event.

Mark Miller

## Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy

LONDON TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB

THOUGH LATE AND battle-weary from travel difficulties, the vigour and spark of Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy were astonishing in their London show. The metallic roar of a brass collective is an unusual thing in jazz – we're used, by now, to any number of saxophone bands, but a mass of trumpets and trombones is diffe-



rent – and it could be that Bowie's group is only beginning to tap into its resources. Whatever, this was a rousing occasion.

The key to the group, resplendent in glistening white taffeta along with their shining instruments, is probably trombonist Steve Turre. He arranges most of the material, as he does in *The Vibration Society*, and it's a very attractive balance of tart commentary and an affectionate voicing of the tunes themselves. They elongate all the melodies, so "Great Pretender" and "I Only Have Eyes For You" seem set up as pastiches in rhythmic terms, yet there's an underlying allegiance to form which never blows the songs to pieces. This is not an anarchic band.

Which is why it's not much like Bowie's other Chicagoan activity. Brass Fantasy are traditional in one sense – they draw on a popular black past and the current black mainstream and have no stitching between the two – and at a tangent to any tradition in another. There isn't much 'jazz' going down here because there are very few and confined improvisations – though the ones that came out, especially from Stanton Davis, made you ache for more. It's more like a carefully sculpted idea about certain aspects of jazz brass playing – a Brass Fantasy, of course!

Bowie himself was perfectly in command, if less wild than he can be. Let's hope he takes the most adventurous strands of this band a lot further. There's much more to say in such a skilful enterprise.

Mike Fish



Lessee in Kentish Town



## Jazz Jamboree '86

WARSAW

THE WONDERFULLY hospitable Poles proved repeatedly during this meticulously well arranged but easy-going five-day festival that they are, as one might expect from reading *Jazz Forum*, second to none in their appreciation of and enthusiasm for improvised music of all kinds, whether it be from visiting Americans like Herbie Hancock and John Scofield or from the many excellent Polish bands which featured in the proceedings.

First US artist to raise the roof of the Sala Kongresowa was B.B. King, who predictably raised many eyebrows among the press contingent by almost totally submerging his unrivalled gifts as the consummate blues artist of our day under his customary cabaret act: handing out roses and plectrums, appointing "Chair-people" in the audience to inform him about his band mugging behind his back etc. When he did play, however, the result was quite simply beautiful: no one coaxes such human sounds, apparently effortlessly, out of a guitar; no one plays a slow blues as achingly lovely.

Highlight of the second day's events were the photographs of W. Patrick Hinely, on display just opposite the concert hall and featuring: not only jazz figures like Sonny Rollins and Jan Hammer – and a heart-warmingly characteristic, prize-winning portrait of the supremely phlegmatic

Freddie Green, his guitar flat on his knee, playing at a fancy-dress ball – but also writers like Kurt Vonnegut and somewhat Hopperesque shots of assorted Americana like gas stations in Florida. The night's music was a mixed bag: most enjoyable were the muscular arrangements and exuberantly wotzy playing of a big band composed of leading Polish and Czech musicians led by Milan Svoboda, featuring the cogent baritone of veteran Jan Praszyński Wroblewski and the aggressively imaginative tenor – which received more exposure the following night with his quartet and with the Clapton-influenced guitarist Tadeusz Nalepa – of Tomasz Szukalski. Interesting and sporadically fiery, but perhaps lacking the stagecraft to give the music the exposure it deserved, were the Cubans, Gonzalo Rubalcaba Grupo Proyecto, most disappointing were the Michał Urbaniak Constellation, featuring the leader not only on his specially treated electric violin but also on soprano and tenor saxophones. Apart from displaying the lack of subtlety that often characterises fusion bands, they seemed under-rehearsed and on one occasion lost themselves completely. After the excellent live album at the Village Vanguard (see Soundcheck), this over-electrified thrash was an unwelcome surprise.

The third evening belonged to Branford Marsalis. Stepping in at the last minute for John Scoblefield in the World Saxophone Quartet, he provided his usual sinuous and thoughtful sound and blended extraordinarily well,

all things considered, in the group's overall sound. Rather misguidedly, they elected to be backed by an over-loud Ronnie Burrage, whose clattering drumming overwhelmed the saxes and resulted in the beat being unnecessarily stated (or even shouted) when it might more satisfactorily have been merely implied, but they did provide some memorable moments in a set which touched a lot of bases – including calypso – in Afro-American music. Herbie Hancock's Round Midnight then commanded the rapt attention of a packed house with a short set of great delicacy and poise, both soloists providing an ultimately wildly appreciative audience with small gems of careful, precise control and compressed subtlety.

If the third evening was Branford's, the fourth was definitely John Scofield's. Preceded by Young Power, a ferociously exuberant big band whose prodigious talents were carried lightly in the manner of Loose Tubes, and backed by a band – Bob Aries (kbds), Dennis Chambers (d), Gary Grainger (b) – which made me change my mind about fusion, he provided a set as close to perfection as makes no difference. It was well-paced, alternating blissfully percussive *tares de force* with extraneously delicate slower tunes and building to a climactic double encore fully deserved for what was a memorable virtuoso performance from all four men.

On the final night the Count Basie Orchestra, under the direction of Frank Foster, swung competently through a set notable in this context chiefly for its inclusion

of the only woman, Carmen Bradford, to appear in any capacity in the entire five days – an anomalous state of affairs, to say the least. The Basie band was preceded by Tomasz Stańko Freeelectronic, who provided a disappointing set full of meandering trumpet and swirling melanges of keyboards and drums, and then by the most adventurous group of the festival, the Dave Holland Quintet. With a strikingly blended front line of Kenny Wheeler (tp), Steve Coleman (as) and Robin Eubanks (tb) and the marvelous Marvin "Smitty" Smith on drums, the quintet played a considered, almost cerebral set with many strong solos – Coleman at times sounded, in his strange, brusque, slightly melancholy way, not unlike his namesake.

The absence of women aside (the one who *was* there was patronised by being introduced as "Some loveliness"), this was a delightful festival – a little too electric for my taste – but lively, warm and, most importantly, received with rapt attention by sell-out crowds.

Chris Parker

## Sonny Rollins

CROYDON  
FAIRFIELD HALL

THERE CAN'T BE anyone in jazz who is loved quite as much as Sonny Rollins. The wave of acclaim and affection that greeted this set seemed to burst from the audience. I suppose he gets it all the time, but the great

LIVE WIRE

man seemed delighted: and his playing reflected our own exuberance for his art.

Rollins, even in his mid-fifties, is still so hungry to play. It's true that some of the fantastically incisive creativity of his early work has left him: he is much more expansive, more all-conquering; and less interested in editing himself or dismantling a theme to its very guts. He prefers to run over and over and over it, and the melody of a tune will be repeated many times, as if Sonny's searching for just the right emphasis. It's that weight of delivery which salvages some of his choices of material: Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely" is made contagiously exciting by the way Rollins keeps wailing out the legato line.

His sound is settling into a fine balance of the old, invincible tone and the softer focus of his 70s work. Two extended cadenzas made one long to attend one of his solo concerts, just to hear that wondrous sound at length: in a reading of "My One And Only Love" that was by turns luxuriant and unsentimentally terse, he toyed with "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" while sliding the original melody in and out of earshot. He opened, slyly enough, with "I'm Old Fashioned" — and gave it a fast, unswerving workout that felt thoroughly modern.

His band are dutiful rather than inspired. Mark Soskin is still solidly on (acoustic) piano. Cliff Anderson comes in on trombone but has only a small space to work in. They're a band to support Sonny. He gives us so much tenor that that's all we need.

Richard Cook



Sonny Rollins in Croydon



## New York Ear And Eye

WHILE THE GREENWICH Village Jazz Festival raged on to his north (by a good 15 blocks), Jerome Cooper, the gifted percussionist, presented a series of five Saturday concerts, entitled "Music Of The Drums". The theme for the month was the connections (to be made) between the Kabbala and sound. Although the drawing of drumheads as interlocking spheres that greeted us on arrival, with the words, "Spirits And Desties" being tossed about, was a bit off the map for me, it was certainly more refreshing than the hype and puffery of the Village Festival – the same acts as usual, only twice the usual advertising.

Cooper, performing in the living room of his loft apartment, with an occasional, spontaneous assist from his little daughter, was mesmerising in an evening that defied categorisation. Building one idea throughout the performance, using a standard drum kit augmented by a miniature marimba and a *charamba* (a drummer's horn from Honduras, he told me, not a musette), the erstwhile Revolutionary Ensemble drummer got a multitude of timbres from one drum without ever altering his attack. This was not jazz drumming, or drum soloing; there was no sacrifice to it, and it was not concerned with displaying speed, strength or keeping time. He began by marching slowly about the drums, playing his *charamba* plaintively (the sound is somewhere between a recorder and a clarinet). His feet pounded a dirge-like beat until he sat at the drums, doing a long section on the toms with mallets. Only eventually did you realise what a visceral pulse had been established.

A riving drum roll came later, though for long stretches it didn't build or swell in the usual sense; it just felt powerful. A five-minute tub solo hardly shifted at all, which forced the listener to concentrate harder, with Jerome's delectable implorings, on what the drum was saying. We heard the drum, not what the drummer did: thunder, a train roaring by, an animal stampede and a marching band. All the instrument's possibilities emerged in stages. With the addition of

the marimba (on top of the drum skin), and finally a cymbal, the building of sound was not an accretion of detail, but the inevitable unfolding of one human rhythm – like the revealing of a human heart.

The audience, at performance's end, became a select discussion group. Having just played this brilliant set for five of us, Cooper began to share ideas with an ingenious attitude – and very little *tanquer*. Obviously too focused on his art to do any serious promoting, and unable to find anyone who will understand and reiterate him fairly, he just shrugs and wonders how to get an audience. The notion of group playing hardly appeals to him any more; what harmonic sans factions a group context can provide he seems to be working out alone. He must be jazz's Sisyphus, always attempting to roll his drums up insurmountable peaks. For months he does nothing but rehearse for 12 hours a day; just he and his drums.

Having grown up next door to Theresa's (the famous Chicago blues night club), and studied with Walter Dyett, he has always been surrounded by music. He played a lot of R 'n' B in the late 50s and early 60s, and even had a photo of himself from his 'conk' days, when he played the Apollo. He had stints in Europe with Clifford Jordan, among others, and mentions bebop as a building block he utilised long ago. His period with the Revolutionary Ensemble was another stage on music's way. It was a good thing, but Cooper talked more about the rehearsals, how lengthy and challenging they were. "We put out five albums, but we hardly worked." What has frustrated him most in the groups he's led since has been his inability to pay his sidemen fairly. "I like to pay my musicians, really pay them what they're worth. Otherwise, forget it."

He has an ambition: playing to an enormous crowd, say 15,000, as the opening act for a rock group. He feels a rock audience could listen if they were presented with his ideas properly. Sisyphus scaling the heights of Madison Square Garden.

Having found no happy (or well-attended) medium, Cooper carrens from five people in his living room to plans of percussion for 15,000. Never looking back, or even to one side (to see if he's being accompanied), Jerome Cooper forges on with his timeless percussion. Even without a niche in the music world, his seamless, visceral playing betrays not a hint of frustration. Watching him carve out a life-pulse in his loft, one sees a player who doesn't separate his life, his home – or his family – from his art.

A VENUE LESS intimate but just as committed to music is the Universal Jazz Coalition, located in the East Village. Run by Cobi Narita, a veteran of 15 years or more in jazz promotion, this must be the most pleasant, comfortable place for hearing music downtown. There is no hectoring or hustling you into or out of the concert space; no slick *maître d'* eyeing you for a tie or a drink minimum. It is said Ms Narita is a tireless publicist, producer and supporter of all kinds of artists – and that she's one of the nicest people in the business.

The UJC has workshops and demonstrations as well as mixed-media presentations, and they recently held a week-long Asian/Asian-American cultural festival. They present music nearly five nights a week in their space, as well as co-producing events in the city's parks during the summer. Although they had a reputation for presenting more conventional fare years ago (they are in their second location for about five years), they are as likely to present Kalapurusha now as Janet Lawson. It is a neighbourhood cultural centre for all members of the music community, and present Discoveries Workshops (where the only stipulation is "you must know the lyrics of your song and have lead sheets") alternating with internationally-known players. All this amid Ron's Reag-ime of arts funding cutbacks.

The UJC allows its performers to produce their own shows if they wish. Billy Harper produced his gig there, presenting excerpts

from his work-in-progress commissioned by the New York State Council and the Jazz Coalition. Nurturing artists is more important here than drawing the bridge-and-tunnel crowd.

The Group, who in name and spirit typify the cooperative ethic, sounded fine if not particularly inspired in this good space. Ahmed Abdullah, the trumpeter, seemed to take the reins on "Rest of Africa", his own composition; but each member of the collective — all survivors of the 60s — had a chance to be featured. Abdullah's piece had a Caribbean texture, and burned when Billy Bang took his violin solo. Fred Hopkins, the sophisticated bassist, turned on Billy and they squared off in a squeaking, sawing duet/tussle. Srone became the third string of this swinging sortie, and for a while we had a little two bass band bounce boogie.

Unfortunately The Group groped on from there, sputtering from piece to piece. Andrew Cyrille, the most African of American drummers, was strong in support, but failed to exhort or connive on his compositional essay, "Tightrope". Marion Brown, suddenly

popping up about town more often, took a risk on Duke's "Warm Valley" (arranged by Bill Brannon), going for a bleating sound on Hodges's usually sultry parts — but the momentum of the evening had already been squandered. Abdullah picked up the flagging

energies some on his "African Song Bird", with his trumpet sketching melodic figures one would like to see fleshed out. But that edge, was not found.

None the less, there was a star: the stage took centre stage, the place was the thing.





Images culled from a New York visit by photographer Andrew Pothecarv TOP: outside and inside Sweet Basil; BELOW: Kenny Barton and RIGHT: Ron Carter

PREVIOUS PAGE: Empire State Building seen from New Jersey.

The Universal Jazz Coalition is a relaxed, encouraging milieu for all who hear music.

TWO OF THE BEST reminders New York could have of its legacy, of the vast history of great black music it has been bequeathed, came recently from living legends Eddie Durham

and Roy Eldridge, both subjects of recent tributes, demonstrated more why they continue to make history than how they made it over the last 60 years. Durham sat patiently as the scholars discoursed on the ABC's of Southwestern Swing, while Little Jazz relinquished nothing as the foremost authority on

arranged such classics as "Topsy", "Swingin' the Blues", "One O'Clock Jump" and "Good Morning Blues", and is credited with being a Founding Father of the electric guitar in jazz, though it is now the dominant instrument in all of popular music. At 80, Durham premiered a new band, inspired by Bate's death —

himself.

Eddie Durham's 80th Birthday Celebration was a gala event Held at St Peter's Church, the unofficial parish of swing (presided over by Pastor Gensel, known as the Good Shepherd of the Night Flock), the guest list included Eddie Barefield, Doc Cheatham, Buck Clayton, Jonah Jones, Andy Kirk, Howard McGhee, Jamil Nasser, Sy Oliver, Ram Ramirez, Max Roach, Earl Warren and many others. There was a big band to play Durham's classic arrangements and compositions, surprise guests who dropped by and even an obtrusive cameraman and gaffer (somehow I can't imagine this made the Ten O'Clock News).

The point of Durham's greatness, of his contributions being largely unsung outside the musicians' world, was compellingly made: Durham was Benny Moren's *idea* man, taking the musical ideas he heard by Louis and King Oliver in Chicago and putting them on paper, he doubled on trombone and guitar, and taught Charlie Christian; was the outstanding student of the Kansas City sound, eventually drafted into Bate's band, where he

he spoke at Count's funeral about the need to keep that music going – and he will be a professor this autumn at the New School, teaching the Roots of Jazz. Doc Cheatham, hale fellow, well met (and still giggling) at 81, suggested that a statue be erected for Durham near the one of George M. Cohan (which stands in the theatre district).

But the way these accomplishments were presented! The constant intrusions by our hosts, repeatedly drumming into our heads such remarks as, "Blue Room" is one of the greatest works of genius of the century." Loren Schoenberg, a disc jockey, musician and former student of Durham, who very capably lead a big band doing Durham classics, would stop after each piece, smile broadly at the audience and explain why that piece was so good. At one point he said to a houseful of musicians, listeners and people in the business, "See what music does for you?" Couldn't these musings have been disseminated in a programme note?

The big band was fine on the ensemble passages and, after a racy "Mten Swing", got the joint hopping on "One O'Clock Jump". The solos, unfortunately, were sluggish, with only Doug Lawrence's sax really digging in on "Blue And Sentimental". As the heavy hitters like Barfield, Warren *et al* stayed out of this grouping, one wondered what these Basie-ites were thinking while lesser talents played their book.

We got to find out. Barfield had amazing chops, mixing things up on "South Bronx Scuffle", showing a really warm tone on "Mten Swing" and re-telling a bizarre story about a rabbit he and Durham killed and ate once.

Earl Warren, looking graceful just standing there holding his horn, sounded as good as he looked. Waiting for another speech to end, he stamped his foot and launched his group into "Swinging The Blues". No young tyro himself (he debuted with Basie in 1938), he swung his quarter hand, only signalling they could ease up on "Good Morning Blues" – where he was sweet and tender. Buck Clayton, no longer a performer, added further dignity to the proceedings with brief and affectionate remarks on the humores and the grand old days of Swing.

It wasn't quite One O'Clock when I stumbled out, to the strains of that most famous of Basie's (and Durham's) pieces, an Warren's jumpin' quartet version. It was sad that such bonhomie, capped off by a gracious, thankful Eddie Durham, should be marred by occasional didacticism over entertainment – and the fact that this was tabbed as an "invitation only" event. None the less it was great fun, seeing all the people who love Eddie Durham, and to think, he developed the Basie

book and made that such a lasting contribution while staying with Basie for only one year.

THE INDEFEATIBLY Eldridge, in his tribute, would brook little palaver about his contributions to jazz; he was too busy reminiscing and instructing, alternately cutting us and cutting us up. Every interjection was viewed as a potential challenge, and he dispensed with all comers the way he did on every bandstand he ever stood on. Instead of affronts to his talent, a question might have been an attack on his wit and memory. And in the legend's own words, anyone trying it got properly "roasted".

The occasion was the annual *Jazz Times* convention, and a more effective speaker on jazz could not be found who's also worthy of a tribute. Although approachable if not forthcoming between panel sessions, it appeared he should stand on his public performances here alone.

David Roy Eldridge seems to get rediscovered every five years or so – though he gets fêted or honoured about once a month. His latest re-discovery can probably be traced to a birthday tribute-cum-radio marathon broadcast by jazz station WKCR in January, 1981 (when Eldridge turned 70). Lately, with the support of legendary disc jockey Phil Schaap, Little Jazz has toured the city's primary schools as a spokesman for the music and goodwill ambassador. There are still swing reunions and festival guest appearances, where he might sing or play some barrelhouse piano, but his expansion into civic duties and statesmanship caused the late Benny Goodman to remark, at a benefit shortly before his death, that Roy "should go on a national speaking tour".

At the main panel session/tribute, Eldridge squirmed through two relatively brief introductions, by fellow panelists Dan Morgenstern and Schaap. Once they acquiesced it was Roy's show, and he handled the microphone as well as his trumpet. He characterised himself in the early days as a hard-working young man when he arrived in New York 50 years ago. He was a diligent musician who honed and perfected his art through endless rehearsing. "Music is like anything else, if you do it long enough you can really get around on it." After a night on the bandstand were the after-hours joints uptown, and he'd go until dawn if he could find cars to play with. "I even kept the trumpet by my bed. Whenever I woke up, the first thing I'd do, I'd play a little." And he concluded this early portrait, "All in all it was a good time . . . we didn't make much money, but we had fun . . . People don't have fun like that any more." At which point he turned to the panelists and

challenged: "Do you see anyone having fun?" The elated way he spoke made me realise I'd never had fun like that, either.

Then came the stories from his heyday, the big band successes of the late 30s and 40s. The nifty, competitive cat was still there, but underneath the lighthearted delivery and fluid tempo was an extremely sensitive soul. He has not forgotten the horrendous, racist insults he suffered as a member of Gene Krupa's band, even if the stories were punctuated with his robust laugh. The future the band caused in the South may seem predictable now, thanks to Billie Holiday's famous accounts, but when Roy explained how the proprietors insisted that he and Anita O'Day stand at opposite sides of the stage for "Let Me Off Uptown" (the song depends on the clever exchanges between trumpeter and singer), even the crowd of funds was surprised. There was the incident in San Diego, where he was refused entrance to a club he was playing at; he had to convince the doorman it was his name featured on the billboard.

During the filming of *Ball Of Fire*, Roy was kept out of the one scene the band played in when the director moved his trumpet chair to the other side of the bandstand (the side not in the camera frame). And the reason given for moving lead soloist Little Jazz was visual, all right: he was too tall. "When I showed up for make-up at 7:00 a.m., on the set, they just ignored me. So I went across the street, bought my own Max Factor, and came back looking like an elf. My hair was standing up six inches." That one broke up the convention.

About O'Day he had few complimentary things to say. "We were fine on stage, getting close on that number, but offstage . . ." On the legendary Teddy Wilson sessions for Brunswick featuring a movie named Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman would cut in when it was Roy's turn to solo. "I'll take that one," he'd say. Roy turned to Teddy, who reminded him that he was getting \$30 for the session, so Roy should keep it to himself. "Goodman made the friction . . . the darts were better without him. Funny thing was, I'd never heard of him before that date . . . I asked Teddy, 'Who is this guy?'"

Of course he spoke lovingly of Bird, whom he portrayed as a really nice guy, and of Billie Holiday, who was told on that first session she wasn't "singing it right" by one of the studio people. Hearing Pops live for the first time had him incredulous – it was at the Lafayette Theatre, 1932, and the piece that did it to him was "Chinatown" – then he recovered, and went out to buy the records.

He never stopped riffing, the whole afternoon, the whole convention. He spoke rhythmically, his finger tapping a steady

CONTINUED ON PAGE 79





HOW BIG  
CAN A BIG  
BAND GET?  
HOW LONG  
IS A PIECE  
OF STRING?



## Loose Tubes on tour

WORDS: MARK SINKER  
PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WHITE

DURHAM, ROUND ABOUT midnight.

Tim Whitehead's talking about herring. How the coming of the railways brought fresh fish to the cities, and how the increased demands meant that the herring lanes came close to being fished out. Everyone's quiet when he stops, because it's a bit of a hard act to follow, I suppose, and he looks round the Indian restaurant.

"I think I'll tell one of the waiters about the fish."



Tim, they're pretty busy, are you sure they'll be interested?

He doesn't mean about the herring. He's notices that the tropical fish in a tank across the room are all clustering up at the surface of the water. Which means they haven't got enough oxygen. The head waiter turns up the pump and the fish break up the conclave and begin swimming round normally, with all the waiters crowding round in surprised delight to watch. "In some places they'd really resent being told about that."

"Have you noticed how the resentment quotient's been going down as we come North?" Django Bates asks. "The hotels up here have been really friendly."

Sometimes countering blind prejudice doesn't need anything more complicated than letting a little air into the proceedings. Loose Tubes' plan to inject difficult music into the pop circuit will work like that, if everything goes right for them. And so far this tour's gone quite spectacularly right. But the changes they've even now effecting are still held back by misunderstandings, some serious, and some not quite so serious. Another guest at the Durham hotel has asked who the strange assortment of young men were. A jazz band Oh, that's nice. Are they on holiday?

Durham's been something of a peak in a run of successful performances, where the shared pleasures of audience and players were quickly discovered and built on. Maybe Northern audiences are friendlier and more willingly receptive to musics they're normally been starved of; but the band are growing in maturity as well, and they've learned a lot in the course of this tour about delivering the goods to suit the mob present.

They represent a huge range of backgrounds and special skills come together. That's one thing. And they listen, to each other and to the world: for all the world as if they were a free improvising trio. The master of sensitivity to atmosphere is probably their senior member, Dave DeFries. At his feet in the last three years, they've learnt what it might mean to be at one with an audience. With a solo player, that's special. With a 21-piece band, it's remarkable.

THE WHOLE DIRECTION of the set is redefined every night, when the order of songs is chosen. Often it's just scribbled on to an envelope at the last moment, hurried chance allowing for maximum receptivity to intuition and inner feeling, perhaps. (Or else just anarchic laziness: what's the difference?) *A: Awaiting Suites From Strangers; Arnold; Arriving; Blue, Children's Games; Clap, Down; Delightful Precipice; Descarga - Descarga Quaverica; Eden Express; Emerge; Fell Man; Goodnight, Herminie's Giant Breakfast; I Can't Get Starved Either; The Market; Mr Zeo, Mo Mournin' Bass; Mo-Uh'; No Beginning; No I Animate; Open Letter To Dada Pukwana; Porter's Mail; Praline & Fugue To*

*Mango; Prylophat A Go Go; Rousing Boat Delivration Egg; Sals Africa, Shelby; Slingshot, Sadhu Brabb; Stanley's Shuffle; Sunny, We Are - Are You?; Would I Were; Yellow Hill (and Young & Fine and Giant Steps). Whoever's turn it is chooses about 15 of these. It's risky. That can't be bad.*

Manchester's a tricky date. It's being filmed by Granada TV, and there has to be a run-through of the set. Among other things, the order's had to be known for days. TV's stupid rigidity runs hard up against their cherished freedoms, imposes an external discipline which is very wearing. (It's been a frustrating day anyway: early start, bus driver losing his way, hotel not ready when they arrive... and they still haven't really forgiven the cameras for some particularly obtrusive fly-on-the-wall stuff a few days earlier.) Some of the band are angry that others aren't sufficiently quelling their natural exuberance, and dragging proceedings out. There's a minor explosion on the bus back to the hotel: Iain Ballamy arguing with Ashley Slater and John Harborne, which expands into the reed section versus the brass. It's an argument about professionalism, and the need to sacrifice some of their flexibility to the demands of programming. It's over almost as soon as it begins, but it leaves a crackle of tension in the air as the hour approaches.

"Arrival" is one of their touchstone songs. At its simplest, it's a gospel pastiche, with Django pumping away on tenor horn. Although they say this isn't a fixture, on each of the four nights that I see it played, three quarters of the band come off-stage into the audience for the latter part of it. In Durham, this fits into the easy party atmosphere. In Leicester, it'll seem like a successful piece of avant-garde experimentalism, in keeping with the more thoughtful presentation that tuba player Dave Powell has gone for. In Coventry, which is like Durham ten-fold, the boundaries between performers and audience seem so minimised that it would be odd if they didn't come down among us. But for the Manchester audience, inhibited by the tiered seating and the cameras, it's a deeply charged moment of pure noise-emotion, when the first players step out over the footlights. In spite of the fixed set, there's been a conference and a decision, to move "Arrival" to kick-off point of the second half. In fact, the TV people agree to it without demur, but it's still a minor triumph for flexibility.

"I was talking to this bloke on a railway platform, Harlow, I think it was, and he's some sort of performing artist, Artilla the Stockbroker or something, and anyway, he was saying that if he doesn't get a proper response from his audience, he throws live maggots at them. I was thinking, there must be something wrong with your act if you have to go that far. But sometimes you really do have to work at it."

Richard Pywell sometimes gets stuck for his

slightly ponderous approach to life from the others, but as a classically trained trombonist come to improvisation through third stream, he provides a usefully different look at the freshness and importance of this orchestra. Everyone is involved at every level, this is what he insists, and anything that goes on at any time matters to everyone. A libelous dedication that's definitely infectious. Although all of them sit in on other projects to pay the rent, they do so as representatives of Loose Tubes.

Mood matters a lot. Sunday's a good day, from the relaxed and expansive breakfast, with entertaining news of Jeffrey Archer's fall to spice it up. The relative success at Manchester has dispelled all traces of conflict. In fact, things are so laid-back that the Question-Answer session that afternoon in Leicester is in danger of turning into a No Question - No Answer - All's Well With The World session. Some things do come up, though. During a discussion of the fabled Jazz Revival, which working musicians are getting increasingly leery about, it seems, Dai Pritchard, the clarinet player from Pontypool, tries to pin down the band's position and output. "What we do isn't new stuff. It's fairly old stuff, old stuff, and very old stuff. But put into strange new combinations." That's far enough. Their songs are still a sum of unlikely parts, they haven't derailed any genuine structural innovations. But they play to their strengths, which are collective composition of a high and hard order, collective improvisation that gets better day by day, and an automatic rapport with audiences.

They're billed as a fun band, and they can be very funny. It's been said this obscures their real value, but I think that's unfair: it's true that the difficult pleasures of their music at its most unsungared, as it came out in Manchester or Leicester when the response was less immediate, that these pleasures are probably more rewarding, and certainly more unusual, than the pop high of their best good-time shows. But after the show at Coventry, in the Warwick University Arts Centre, it's just being, um, curmudgeonly to decry their skills at raising an audience to fever pitch, and dancing (more or less) to free collective blowing. Even in their most populist pop-comedy mode, they're a bit too "Jazz", a bit too "Music", for there to be an easy tude after the Contemporary Music Network and the Arts Council have retreated into the background. If most people don't seem to be afraid of the outer reaches of sonic exploration under a Loose Tubes umbrella, a lot of businessmen still do.

"WE WERE WALKING back to the hotel in Leeds, and we were just passing these two guys when Dave happened to be imitating a free saxophone player." Ashley Slater, the MC and Bass Trombone player, is recounting tales of the Glabrous Association - which is basically him and Dave Powell, but looks as if it might

extend to their immediate neighbours on the stand, John Eacott and John Harborne, because there's a fortuitous gathering in the brass of shaved skulls and receding hairlines: "I mean, we were both dressed up and I guess we looked pretty weird, and Dave sort of went OO-EE-OO-AAARGH-BLART! just as we passed them, and they were terrified. They were looking at us, and they said, Look at that for a set of knobheads I love that. A set of knobheads." He slips into an accent: "I'd like a set of Wedgwood knobheads please. Can you wrap them? And have them delivered? They're a gift for a friend..."

He laughs. He laughs at everything. His clowning has an odd, aggressive edge that'll probably get him into trouble one day, and his MC-ing isn't to everyone's taste, but you could see he was moved by the reception they'd had at Warwick University. People sometimes ask him if it's his band. But not often. It doesn't really feel as if it's anyone's. Even Django, prancing down at the front, seems more an Indian than a chief. Of course, with a tradition that demands SOLOISTS first and collectivity later, if at all, that's going to be a problem. But democracy always is a problem.

On this tour, they've had two huge advantages. One is the best possible sound crew, Richard and Shirley of Richard Nowell Sound Services performing an efficient, intelligent, and indispensable wonder with the monitoring and PA for 21 alert players. And the other is the Tubes rhythm section. Steve Argüelles may not be a flashy player, but he has a knack for inscribing a clarity into some of their wildest passages, and he's well accompanied by Thebe Lipere's percussion and Steve Berry's bass in this.

"This tour was the first time we could really hear each other."

That's the general consensus. Berry's a founder member, but Lipere's only just joined them, although they've wanted him to since they came together. He's a bonus that they won't lightly give up, I think, and for his part, the humour and the seriousness and the commitment to free improvisation are all greatly to his taste.

"ACCEPTING SUITES From Strangers" (cheeky notes: D Bates: Dig this field<sup>1</sup> and I can't see any reason why not to/To what/T-T-T-Tea Tray/Tres bon, M'sieur/Sur la table and I want you/To know that I like, like, like, like, like, like life, like life light/like life, light, libel, and joy<sup>2</sup>/Can I get you something<sup>3</sup>? Perhaps a line and a groovy raga<sup>4</sup>? Then again - perhaps not?/What's it all about<sup>5</sup>? Doubt<sup>6</sup>/Yes, that's it/Doubt, doubt, doubt, doubt/What are your main influences<sup>7</sup>? Richard Cook COOK<sup>8</sup>/Jack Massarik<sup>9</sup>. . . BURN<sup>10</sup>/You say Ken Hyder,<sup>11</sup> we say 'kin ada<sup>12</sup>/Let's call the whole thing off/oom-ba-da-ga-dow etc.

1) The field of jazz. 2) Cliquis talk - stream of consciousness - absurdist jazz chat. 3) A positive bit. 4) Another positive bit.

5) Strange piece of music. 6) Perhaps coke's not a good idea when you're trying to play music, or live. 7) Age-old interviewer's favourite question - answers always taken to mean "Heroes I wish to emulate." 8) Yes, lots of us are influenced by our critics. They depress and frustrate us often. Cook is a reference to Iain Ballamy's count-in to steamy jazz section. 9) Another critic, not very good sax player. 10) At the stake? Or an instruction to swing? 11) Another bad critic. Terrible drummer also. 12) Work it out.

"I HAD MISGIVINGS about it. Because it's a band with 21 guys. But they've been terrific, just so professional and co-operative."

Shirley, the severe looking mix-desk operative, wouldn't take any bullshit from uppity men. It's another nail in the coffin of the "racist and sexist" tag that's been dogging them. There's a relatively tiny percentage of women and of black musicians working in the relevant areas: Loose Tubes, notoriously, have only picked up one from the second category (Thebe, who's from Pretoria), and none from the first. It's unfortunate: but it isn't exactly their fault if no one's been applying.

There has to be such a delicate balance of wills in a group that dedicate themselves to the nakedness of free play. Any tokenist hire 'em fire 'em antics would shatter that: and that seems to be all that their critics are concerned with. OK, it's a social problem, and they have a duty to consider it. But really it's hard to set out exactly how unfair the charges are, all told. They represent precisely that collective democracy in action that some of their critics only dream of. To lose that for the sake of surface gestures would be stupid.

Hear them playing. There's nothing reactionary in that sound. And in the course of this tour, I'd say they were also reaching a point of maturity where they'll be far more open to guests of any category: a confidence in flexibility is beginning to replace the earlier fragility and occasional clumsy clowning. We'll see.

Till about a week ago, I had no interest in Loose Tubes. They were a Big Band and that meant "Jazz Revival" and that seemed to mean the undead taking up seats meant for the new and vital. I was misinformed, shall we say? Maybe I shouldn't saddle them with hype, or set them up in competition against the other players presently coming up into the limelight, but for my money they're right there at the forefront of innovation, and deserve a bit of notice for it. I'd like to see what a composer like Braxton could do for them: that's the only thing that would represent a step up from their present position. They have problems, maybe, of focus and of presentation, but really they're minor compared to the potential that's seething and skipping under the surface. Go for it.

The next day I went out to buy a Wayne Shorter album. But I changed my mind. I bought a set of Wedgwood knobheads instead. As a gift to myself.





PHOTOGRAPHY: Val Wilmer

the winner of WIRE's best jazz photographer award has been observing musicians at work and rest for many years. as a tribute to val's work with the camera, we're pleased to present four classic studies from her archives. two pictures taken in new york, two in london.



LEFT:  
herbie hancock,  
1966

FAR LEFT:  
the revolutionary  
ensemble in  
rehearsal



ABOVE: johnny griffin in trafilgar square



L. E. F. T. : baba gonzales and his coat



PERCUSSION AND LIVE ELECTRONICS CREATE  
NEW WORLDS OF SOUND. TWO MASTERS OF  
THE ART EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF THEIR CRAFT.

THEY'RE TWO QUITE different men. Paul Lytton, born in London, is tall, muscular, rather well-spoken; Paul Lovens, born in Aachen, is small, meek, reticent. They began as dance and jazz drummers in the 60s and independently found their way to improvising forms on their drumkits. Free jazz liberated drummers from timekeeping, but improvising percussionists now create whole worlds

of free sound. Lovens and Lytton are among the most accomplished figures of the art.

They're linked because they've worked comparatively often as a percussion duo, a rare combination in free music; and they operate one of the best improvised music record companies, Po Torch. As stylists, their links are less obvious. Lytton festoons his angular kit with 'live electronics', treatments that seem to comment on the percussion coming from hands and feet: two separate sound fields revolve around him. Lovens is a hyperactive blur among his strange old





LEFT: PAUL LYTTON - THE  
CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY,  
WOOD AND SKIN, UNDER  
A CLOUDY SKY RIGHT:  
PAUL LOVENS - DRUMS,  
CYMBALS, BELLS AND SAW,  
IN THE SHADOW OF THE  
TOWER

PAUL LOVENS AND PAUL LYTTON

## The Inclined Sticks

WORDS RICHARD COOK

PHOTOGRAPHY JAYNE HOUGHTON, CONEYL JAY

battered drums and cymbals. His sounds are beautifully precise, a shimmer of rings and reports. Each has pioneered and brought to fruition the accuracies and ambitions which improvising has made possible.

"There's direct musical relationships, how to match sounds, whether I want to interfere with what's going on. Sometimes I have a picture in my head but the stuff's going past so quickly. The most thought is when you're not actually playing, just sitting and listening and trying to think what to do next. In the pauses, you wonder how to get involved.

it's another matter.

"At the beginning, it felt like I had goals, which have definitely changed over the years. There are aspects which involve work, as I understand it, but there are entertainment aspects too. I don't think there's a great deal of difference between what improvising musicians and so-called pop musicians do. It depends on the individual musician's attitude."

Lytton has worked in a duo with Evan Parker (*Collective Call*, *Unity Theatre*, *Ra 1 & 2*), with various European groups; and solo.

"I'm a poor judge of what's good and what's bad on a gig. I know there's good stuff and bad stuff in every gig I've done."

Paul Lytton was here last spring, to play in the Incus Festival, but he is an infrequent visitor now. He lives in Belgium and works mainly on the continent. Work is scarce and badly supported: improvising is in recession all across Europe. "I don't know what that says about the music. To me it says more about our Kleenex culture. Not many are interested in looking for deeper qualities."

LYTTON APPEARS A forbidding figure at his kit. With his headset, severe profile and big shoulders, he looks scientifically committed to the work of improvising. Socially, with a ready smile and a jolly line in anecdotes,

His lone wolf record *The Inclined Stick* (PTR 4), though maddily recorded, captures something of his scratching, unquantifiable music. It's not a music of rhythm or melody or texture. He makes sounds like music.

"I do prefer groups, because I haven't had enough experience playing solo. The rest would be to play two or three solo sets a night for a week, and I don't think I could do it at this point. It's a valuable activity, but only in regard to my ability for playing in a group."

Lytton has created percussion out of unlikely material. The free drumkit is invariably large. Is he obliged to use everything available in a performance?

"No, but I'm aware that I use certain things more than others. I've cut kits down over the years. Certain objects weren't paying their way. I had a kit with three bass drums and a huge frame with suspended objects. What's been constant is the live electronics stuff."

"I did a gig earlier this year where we were all tired out from a long drive and I had to cart my kit down into a basement - and there was a very flashy-looking Sonor kit already there. It went through my mind that I could use it, but I just touched one of the drums... and I used my own kit. I prefer to battle with my own skins."

"I can play very quietly, but it's difficult with drums. When you practise, part of it is to play very fast and quietly and have control. The main problem is to pace yourself. Not to use the whole vocabulary in the first five minutes. Though that can be interesting... then you wonder what you do for the next 40 minutes! You might have to improvise!"

Groups of the same instrumentalists have become accepted, even popular. A drum duo is still unusual, though the experiments of Max Roach and Milford Graves paved the way. Lytton and Lovens have three Po Torch albums of their duets, the best and most recent being *The Fench*. But their finest record together is probably *Death Is Our Eternal*

*Friend* with Toshinori Kondo (IMA (J) 002): decently mixed, their meeting with the great trumpeter is a spiky, explosive meke of impacted, harsh, white sounds.

"Paul and I are close friends outside the music, and that's a difference for me. We're good foos for each other. I did a gig with Malford Graves, Sven-Ake Johansson and Frank Perry, but I haven't dared listen to the tape of it yet! I find it refreshing with Paul. We're relieved of playing certain kinds of roles that you have to play with other musicians."

Like being drummers?

"Actually, I enjoy playing the drums a bit more now. But we're just there, as two musicians, just playing."

PAUL LOVENS HAS A CURIOUSLY HARMONIC VOICE. It sounds very deep, with high overtones. He has the rare gift, which a few Europeans possess, of making English sound fresh and new.

"I started when The Beatles came up, and my sister had Chris Barber records, so I followed those records. I played with dance groups and groups who played like Jelly Roll Morton, then like hard bop, Tony Williams with Miles Davis... When I play at home I never use the set I use on gigs. I use an old Gretsch set, nice cymbals, very classical. I play what comes into my head, combinations from three time-playing drummers - Roy Haynes, Frank Butler and Elvin Jones. I try to play licks that sound like one of theirs. I just fumble around. Sometimes I do it to warm up at a gig. It's to relax me."

When he's warmed up, Lovens is the most astonishing sight in free music. He seems to set himself into the music, a concentrated dot among a lot of drums that bark and rattle, clanging cymbals and bright metals. When he rubs a horseshoe bow on a cymbal or plays the saw, a shaft of singing enters the sound. As loud as he gets, the drums never sound beaten, more run across.

"I went to a summer school in Germany and that was the first time I could play with people without trying to sound like Tony Williams. It was totally with what the other people were playing. Then I met Manfred Schoof and Alex, that was '69. Then I left everything behind, no more dance music or

jazz. I saw Han Bennink play and I was shaking my head. It was like kicking you on your way, come on, do something. But how could I get my own style? I don't know how I did. I carried on and on."

In some ways Paul Lovens is the final distance from jazz drumming; he creates great propulsion, yet never seems close to anything like 'time'. Or does he?

"Did you hear the trio at the Festival? I thought I never played that much accurate, straight, very fast 4/4. The way both hands related towards each other was much more regular. It's good, of course. It has to be there to let you go away from it. You can ignore it for ten years but..."

"I always take my watch off and I can see it if I turn my head. In terms of time, some five minutes are quite different from other five minutes. I always play for 45 or 60 minutes because after that I begin to lose concentration. Do you remember that 24-hour thing that Evan did? (some of it is on *Crescendo Rhythms*, Incus 33). I actually got up from the kit after three and a half hours. Was I tired? I don't know! I knew it was going to be a long concert. Your economy sets itself unconsciously."

In the trio with Alex Schlippenbach and Evan Parker, possibly the most ritually powerful small group this side of Last Exit, Lovens is at his most dynamic. Their numerous records, mostly on EMP, have lots of meters into the red. Does he like to make plenty of noise?

"There was a time when I'd been making lots of noise and I wanted to play quietly... and that was a year when I had a lot of gigs with Globe Unity Orchestra, and it caused a lot of trouble! There I have to be like a shepherd dog and do a lot of barking. And I wanted to do the little sounds and the small cymbals. I think it's quite balanced now."

"It's always bad if you're playing on the stage and you feel not everybody's there and attentive and concentrating. So it's harder playing in bigger groups. I want to play with those who really want to play."

"Solo work, I'm still too scared to do. I've done it two or three times and for no longer than 30 minutes. You have to do what you want all the time! The whole thing is your responsibility. I don't like to run after people

or serve or follow them, but the interaction is good. If you don't ask me questions, for instance, I might not talk at all."

MELODY CAN BE drawn out of percussion, and Lovens is a percussionist who loves melody. With a melodic player like Michel Pilz, on their superb *Carpathia* set (EMP 0260), he's at his most refined and resourceful. Is he ever jealous of melody instruments?

"I'm angry with those who can play melodies and don't. Horns and pianos are there to do that. Drums can play with the melodies. Before I played a musical saw I used a bow, and that had less to do with pitch than with getting sustained sounds which I could only do with a roll. I can't play tunes on the saw, it's quite difficult. I have two or three little melodies of maybe four notes that I could play again and again! They should be like the way the saw moves, in curves and spirals."

Paul has moved from his longtime home in Aachen to Genova in Italy. Is it, he says ruefully, just like his old place: the drainhole of the country. There is always rain. Not much local music. He busies himself with the book-keeping for Po Torch, only a dozen issues strong but a valuable presence.

"I wanted to do the playing, be a producer, type letters and make phone calls. I could have joined EMP but that meant moving to Berlin. So we began Po Torch."

"I wonder how often I had the chance to listen to Sonny Rollins live? I heard him once in Belgium. I can't remember how he played. I remember how he looked. So, in that sense... I play records every day."

It's disgraceful that such a brilliant, selfless musician should be so neglected: he worked one gig in January, one in February, and makes his most solid earnings out of occasional Goethe Institute tours. It's the way of this music, and it's wrong.

I am amazed at the situation, says Paul Lovens, but one can't always be amazed. Yet the sounds these two compatible, gentle men make are enough to be amazed at for a lifetime.

(Po Torch records should be fairly easy to obtain from jazz dealers, or write direct to Paul at Vno Della Rosa 1111, I-16123 Genova, Italy.)

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## Recollections Of The Future

PEOPLE WITH excessively tidy minds always resent jazz musicians getting mixed up with symphony orchestras, so this month, just to annoy them, let us start with the Western European premiere of the Russian composer ALFRED SCHNITTKE's Symphony No. 1. This is



ALFRED SCHNITTKE

given by the BCC Symphony Orchestra under Gennadi Rozhdestvensky at the Festival Hall on 17 December and includes the participation of Rein Rannup, jazz piano, and Pavel Meigi, jazz violin. Schnittke describes this 1972 piece as a "confrontation of different musics... an acoustic cross-section of the present day". Incidentally, Rozhdestvensky opens this concert with HAYDN's Symphony No. 45

"The Farewell". This is quite something to see as two by two the players take a powder and leave the platform until only a brace of violins are left to end the music. Less incidentally, the Hagen Quartet from Salzburg, winners of the 1982 Portsmouth Quartet Competition, sandwich Schnittke's Canon in Memoriam Igor Stravinsky between quartets by BRETHOVEN and SCHUBERT at the Wigmore Hall on 9 December.

Actually, a fair number of contemporary works are comfortably enmeshed among long-established matter this month. For example, the string trio version of JUDITH WEIR's *Sketches From A Bagpiper's Album* is heard along with MOZART and BEETHOVEN opuses from the Prometheus Ensemble in the Purcell Room on 1 December. This is a title which our editor, Richard Cook, thought the writer of this column had manufactured as a *jest* (as if I would ever be guilty of a *jest*!), but on 17 December Christopher Cramer confirms the work's reality by performing the clarinet and piano version. He further plans to pack the Purcell Room by playing LUTOSLAWSKI's *Dance Preludes*, BERIO's *Sequenza IX*, P. MAXWELL DAVIES's *Sredman Doubles* and the London premiere of SALONEN's *Nachtlieder*. Similarly, ANORZJ PANUFNIK's *Sinfonia Sacra* precedes MOZART and MENDELSSOHN pieces when Semyon Bychkov conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the Festival Hall on 4 December, and THEA MUSGRAVE's *Night Music* separates Haydn from Mozart when the London Mozart Players play in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 10 December. Again, the world premiere of MARTIN ELLERBY's *Souvenirs Toi, Oradout-sur-Glance* is heard amid contributions by MOZART, BRAHMS and POULENC when another clarinetist, Linda Merrick, ventures into the Purcell Room on 12 December.

The other main South Bank event this month is an appearance by the Northern Saxophone Quartet in the Purcell Room on 20 December. They present new Quartets by DAVID KERSHAW and David Cooper that will have their London premieres, as well as more familiar items such as JEAN RIVIER's *Grave Et Presto*, PHIL WOODS's *Three Improvisations* for Saxophone Quartet, and Quartets by PAUL READE and CLAUDE PASCAL.

Meanwhile the Parke Ensemble's "Autumn 1986: Three British Composers" series reaches its predestined end at the October Gallery on 10 December. Two of the three composers are represented, DAVID LANCASTER and JOHN WOOLCOTT, both with world premieres. The former's *Angels Still Silent* and a new piece by the latter, as yet unnamed but known to feature the counter tenor Christopher Robson, and therefore the main points of interest. The contralto Katrina Makepeace-Lott again takes part, and this programme opens with STRAVINSKY's *Octet* and HARRISON BIRTWISTLE's *Ring A Dumb Carillon*. (What a talent for titles he has!)

WHILE THIS SERIES ends, the Lontano ensemble are still hard at it, over at St John's Smith Square, celebrating their tenth anniversary. On 11 December they devote a whole concert to MAURICE OHANA, a most interesting French composer of British and Andalusian ancestry whose output ought to be better known here. His cosmopolitan background plus a wide knowledge of literature and the visual arts have led to an openness of mind that has perhaps made him too independent a figure for some tastes. Though much affected by such representative French and Spanish composers as Debussy and Falla, Ohana has also concerned himself with Byzantine music, some of the musics of Africa, and jazz. Sometimes his work employs micro-intervals, and this within a style of impressive polyphonic and harmonic finesse. He has arrived at a particularly individual and original way of writing for the piano, and the Lontano programme includes the British premiere of *Deux Etudes d'Interpretation* for piano and percussion, performed by Paul Roberts, a noted Ohana interpreter, and Martin Allen. This occasion's other UK premieres will be of Ohana's *Mass* and of a piece titled *Kyprios*. This concert is at 7.30 pm and at 6.15 pm the composer gives a talk about his music.

At The Place, Duke's Road, they do things differently, for there the mighty Electro-Acoustic Music Association of Great Britain holds sway. On 1 and 2 December they are putting on *The Glass Tower*, a one-act children's opera, but a one-act children's opera with electronic music. By IAN DEARDEN funded by the Michael Tippett Foundation. That will be unusual, but ten days later—on 11–13 December, to be precise—they venture further out. As far as Slough, at least. On those dates Vocem, known as an electric voice theatre group, performs BERIO's *A-Ronne* and *The Sound Of Purple*, a new piece by PETER VINCENT and ALAN BELK and funded by the Arts Council, which, at least according to the advance publicity material, depicts events on a rainy night in Slough. An earlier work rendered by Vocem was described in our esteemed contemporary *Classical Music* as being "like a new-music version of *Dallas*—callous, scheming, potent, full of sex". Perhaps it was a mistake to mention Vocem at all.

To which must be added a couple of intimations for January, both marking centenaries. KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI will on 25 January conduct the British premiere of his Polish Requiem in the Festival Hall. This will involve the massed forces of the BBC Singers, BBC Symphony Orchestra and four vocal soloists. Penderecki has been assembling this work over the last several years, since composing a *Lacrimosa* to commemorate those killed in the 1970 Gdansk uprising; the *Agnus Dei* was likewise prompted by the death of Cardinal Wyszyński in 1982. The work ends with an expression of hope for "the resurrection of our freedom, our independence", and this concert, presented by the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, Oxford, celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great pianist Artur Schnabel.

On 29 January the Lontano ensemble, still at St John's, pay tribute to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nadia Boulanger, our century's most famous composition teacher (Copland, Lennox Berkeley, Piston, Virgil Thomson, Françaix, Elliott Carter, Szpák are just a very few of her pupils). CARTER's Cello Sonata will be included, NICHOLAS MAW's Flute Quartet, a Quintet by ANTHONY POWER and the London premiere of *Two Mores* by JAMES WOOD.



MAURICE OHANA

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BRANFORD MARSALIS

## Blowing in the Tradition

WORDS NICK COLEMAN

ILLUSTRATION IAN WRIGHT

THE SAXOPHONE CAT OF THE MARSALIS FAMILY, KEEPING JAZZ ALIVE IN THE SHADOW OF HIS OWN COMPUTING: AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW.

### THE RAKE'S PROGRESS. A discourse

SCENE: THE ROOM OF EXPANSION OF CBS PRESS OFFICE 1. NYMPHS, FAUNS AND PENS GIGGLING GAMBLER AROUND THINKING FOUNTAINS. MARBLE STATUARY OF HERBES ANCHORED AND MODERN GLAZE IMPASSIVELY FROM THE JOYOUS COMMUNION. ALL IS PEACEFUL. IN ONE EXOTICALLY DRAPED ALCOVE RECLINES THE RAKE BRANFORD, ENTHRONED. AT HIS FEET A PALID MORE THINGIES COVER HIS QUILL LIKE A GRASSHOPPER. THE DISCOURSE COMMENCES.

"Floppy discs."

Floppy discs?

"Sure, I've got to find a terminal emulator or some 3 1/2 inch floppy discs with an MS DOS installed programme for my PC. IBM uses MS DOS, but they only have 5 1/4 inch discs. I use an Apple."

And what do you do with this Apple?

"I use it for sending messages and stuff, trying to keep my life from becoming a total wreck. I'm real macho about doing my own shit. Most men are pussies when it comes to taking care of business, but I don't wanna get into the position where my manager's taking care of *all* my business. Before you know it, your manager's making decisions for you about *everything*. Mind you, these days it don't make

much difference, 'cos some of these pop artists know less about music than their managers. God, I miss the 70s."

Do you want to be a pop artist?

"Nah. I just wanna have something to listen to when I get home of a night."

Lake what?

"Old 70s records, man."

Lake what?

"Led Zeppelin. I got a tape of *Led Zeppelin 3*. I'm taking on the road with me right now."

What do you hear in that?

"The sound of quality. To me, there's two kinds of music: good music and bad music. I hear the sound of quality in Led Zeppelin. I hear the sound of quality in Yes albums, at least all the ones up to *Relayer*. For me the end of Led Zeppelin was *Physical Graffiti*, their best album. The same peaking thing happened with Earth, Wind and Fire with *All'n'All* and then, like a lot of black artists, they got sacked by this cross-over shit."

And String?

"Oooh, man. People can say I sold out if they want, but they can listen to my new album and that will speak for me. For all my little jazz detractors there's a nice little jazz record. They can chop it up if they want to."

### OF HUMAN FEELINGS: Jealousy, Blasphemy and the life of Reilly

HERBIE HANCOCK SAYS he likes your playing because you go right to the edge of the abyss

and look over

"Yeah, man. I look for that edge. I'm never really satisfied. I always wanna play something different."

Do you feel at home having been elevated to the ranks of such revered elder statesmen?

(Coyly) "Yeah . . . I didn't three years ago, though. I was shitting on myself. But down in the south, where I come from, we have reverence for our elders. You go to New York and nobody has respect. The saddest cats in the world going 'Fuck Herbie, man. I got some shit for Herbie.' To me that's blasphemous. I mean, I still can't believe I'm playing with Herbie. My hero."

And this Tradition thing of yours and

Wynton's . . .

"That comes from our Dad."

Let me read you a quote from an interview with Lester Bowie in NME: "Tradition" Marsalis goes on about the great jazz tradition but the great jazz tradition was never [about] copying. Wynton is just Miles' little son."

(The Rake's eye, 'til this moment utterly deadpan, defy conventional systems of meaning and become even more deadpan)

"That's cute. That's envy. You listen to Miles talk about when he was playing, he'd say he was trying to sound like Fats Navarro and Louis Armstrong. Little boys, when they're growing up they get everything from their parents and then, out of that, they create their own identity. Lester Bowie is a shadow of a trumpet player next to my brother."

"It's like this idea of Soul. In America black





people identify with Africans. But they don't understand the African social system. Americans think Africans are free-wheeling, happy people who swing around on vines and live in huts and live the life of Reilly. They think they sit around and eat coconuts all day. They don't understand the tribal system and work and how socially complex it all is. They say 'Well, ignorance is bliss, man, and these some blissful shades, man, so since we're descendants of Africans, our music has to reflect that. So you get Lester Bowie walking around in a doctor's coat wheezing out notes, playing all that stuff that's totally free and uninhibited — jungle music (*the tone of my is intense*). And that's what western people, white people like to hear. Hmm, they go. This is jazz-azz, this is soulful. And Soul has always been equated with 'lack of', with ignorance. For you to have Soul, you have to be real country-looking and wild. So, of course, Wynton is Soul-less 'cos he wears great suits and his incredible technique. I know Lester and I dig his trumpet playing, believe it or not. I dig the Art Ensemble, I can't see at as anything but jealousy for Lester to say that. It's inhumanity. Wynton is good for jazz. End of conversation."

I think that what Lester's saying is also what Miles is saying these days: let's not talk about jazz, let's talk about music.

"Yeah, well, shit; that's a cop-out for Miles. People believe everything Miles says. It's got to be the point where there's a complete inability to see Miles as anything but Jesus."

But why is Miles saying let's forget about jazz?

"Because he can't play jazz no more."  
(*The scribe is clearly feeling faint. His hand shakes, a shadow has passed across his brow. He is in Boyle Overdrive*)

What do you think of *Tata*?

"Like the first side. Second side is rubbish. But *Tata* isn't a jazz record, so I'm going to judge the record on the level that it's on. Now, Miles played with all the greats, all my idols, so I have a long way to go before I can come down on Miles Davis, but in a way the good things in *Tata* are more of a tribute to Marcus Miller than to Miles. It seems a pity to me that a man with a mind like Miles' is relegated to just a trumpet player. Hugh Masekela could of done this record. It's a production job."

I'm not sure that I entirely...

"Miles don't play jazz no more but feels kinda funny about it, so instead of just admitting that his chops aren't what they used to be, he puts jazz down. When he says jazz ain't shit, it makes it kinda hard on us who really want to play it."

(*Silence has fallen on Namada*)

## OF MEAT AND MEN

"I wanna kick ideas around for a while and get really serious about jazz when I'm 30 (*he's*

26). I haven't been serious about it since I've been playing. I mean, I'm serious, but I haven't been hell-bent on making my own statement. I'm serious about learning how to play like those other great guys, like Lester Bowie said. I guess I'm everybody's little son, really."

(*He laughs in the way that people do when they're not entirely sure about what they've said*)

And what do you think of the British branch of the family?

"I think it's great what's happening over here. In fact I've just got that young British cat Julian Joseph (*Quintet on Courtney Pine's LP*) in my new band."

Good?

"Sounds shut (*laughs again, more certainly*). But when I was his age I was worse. He works hard though. He's got great fire and determination to play. All he has to do now is play more and more. My man is gonna be incredible, incredible."

And Courtney?

"... has to come to New York. That's all. He's bad, he's serious, but if he really wants to play some shit he, all of 'em, are gonna have to come to New York. Tell you something: when I played with some of those cats in a club in Brixton, their determination, their *seriousness* was greater than I've seen anywhere but in New York for a long, long time. But, you see, New York is where the meat is. Courtney can say what he wants, but in five years his ass will be across the water."

## OF MYTH AND MEN

HAVE YOU SEEN *Round Midnight*?

"Yeah, man. Dexter Gordon is a fantastic actor, man. He plays that part to the hilt 'cos he's playing himself. But I must admit I'm tired of this whole bohemian bit. 'I live for mah music' shit, all of this 'I play til the blood's coming outta mah mouth' stuff. But I'm glad the movie was made. I'm so indebted to that French cat for making that film. The only thing America's had to say about jazz in a movie is Tony Curtis coming with his saxophone from Wisconsin, sharing an apartment with Debbie Reynolds and not a black face in sight. And here's Tony coming in and saying (*an appalling impression of Tony Curtis follows*): Hey You Cats, I Wanna Play Some Ja-a-azz. And there's these white cats sitting around and going: Hey, Car You Gotta Be With-it, Man, You Dig, Man, Yeah!!!"

Actually, *The Benny Goodman Story* was cool. They had Hamp in the movie, Teddy Wilson too."

Wasn't Goodman the first white big band leader to hire black players?

"Benny Goodman was the first white big band leader who just decided he was going to be a musician. But to get back to the point, I think it had to take a European to make a movie about jazz."

Do you think Hollywood's incapable of it?

"Yes, I do. 'Cos jazz is against everything Hollywood represents. They have to fictionalise jazz, sensationalise it, make it into... like what they did with Billie Holiday in *Lady Sings the Blues* with that decrepit woman Diana Ross impersonating a great artist. Other than the fact that she was on skag and was raped as a kid, you didn't learn nothing about her. Lester Young wasn't included, they didn't have the Basie band. They didn't do shit but show her singing in a few clubs, getting strung out on drugs and falling in love with Billy D. Williams, another fictional character: Joe Suave with his suave hair coming in and going (*basis profundis*): Hey, baby! You need a ride home! (*aprasno*) Str-i-ings! A pile of shit."

So jazz music will always remain 'outside'?

"Yeah, 'cos it's basically black music."

What about the Epic Crossover Adventure, as George Clinton calls it?

"They're just acting like white people. Michael Jackson? He looks about as black as a Shetland pony, he looks about as black as Opie Taylor: Okay, Bucko! He looks about as black as Ron Howard (*aprasno*): Happier Days! I mean, that's cool if that's what he wants to do, I'm not gonna stoop low like everybody else and make allusion to his sexual preferences, 'cos that's not germane to the issue — that's real below-the-belt stuff — I mean, people are envious of the fact that the man's sold 40 million records and they say Yeah, he's a fag! I mean, what has that got to do with the price of chickens in Afghanistan? What I'm talking about is being black, I mean, Lionel Richie and his soft, polite voice going, 'Thank you, Pepsi. That's not black.'"

## ON MONEY

Do you do rock tours for the money?

"I don't do nothing for the money. I always make enough money playing jazz. Shit, I made \$80,000 with Wynton in 1983 — playing jazz. Jazz may not make \$6 million a year, but I don't need the fact that a year."

"People who don't make money just have bad business acumen. That's another reason I'm all wrapped up in these computers. We're going for endorsements, the works. Jazz comes to the 1980s out of a sudden instead of being stuck in the 1880s."

"My dad used to tell me: Look man, I'm a musician, all I gotta do is play, I can't be bothered with all that other shit. Well, you should be bothered with it! If they give you a shitty microphone and your record sounds like garbage nobody's going to say. Well, you gotta take into consideration that the microphone... They're gonna say, Ellis Marsalis's record sounds like shit and the cover sucks too. You have to be responsible for that kind of thing."





LESTER BOWIE

## Blowing out the Tradition

WORDS: PAUL BRADSHAW

PHOTOGRAPHY: DEREK RIDGERS

THE MAN FROM ST LOUIS, THE TRUMPET BLAST IN CHICAGO, THE BOSS OF BRASS FANTASY: THE BIG CIGAR SMOKES OUT THE OPPOSITION.

NOBODY PLAYS TRUMPET like Lester Bowie. A shaman with a golden horn, a lab-coated scientist of sound who endlessly delves into the annals of the great black music tradition conjuring echoes from the aboriginal dreamtime to the marching bands of New Orleans . . . that's Bowie.

Onstage he can virtually knock himself over blowing one note, conducting the Brass Fantasy band he becomes the image of a possessed, shoe shufflin', revivalist preacher; a hipster with funky shoes, philly crop and neatly trimmed, twin pronged goatee . . . that's Bowie.

A musician with the same expansive, international spirit as Sun Ra, Don Cherry and the much missed Rahsaan Roland Kirk, yet rooted in the tradition from Louis Armstrong to Cecil Taylor, Bowie and his irrepressible innovative cohorts in the Art Ensemble have for two decades forged their own musical agenda. They've survived and built a following for their ideas and their music, but as Bowie says, "In this business I don't know any group that makes enough. No musician can stay alive by being in one group, you have to have a multitude of other things happening."

What's happening now is Bowie's Brass Fantasy, and at their one-off London gig their hybrid band of 'Avant Pop' wooed an audience, initially irritated by an unavoidable late start, into a state of near-ecstasy.

My first encounter with this impishly enigmatic horn player was some seven years ago. In London to perform with Amina Myers, Bowie was jet-lagged and bombed on brandy. They'd flown in after rehearsing the now legendary Sho Nuff, fifty-nine-piece big band that was made up of all "the baddest cats in contemporary music".

The man was wild. Our conversation ranged over the early days of the AACM (Assoc. for the Advancement of Creative Music), crazed multimedia jam sessions at the Hungry Eye in Chicago, his two-year stay in Jamaica — his love of reggae, the merits of ganja, drinking boats with Melba Liston and how to project your tone over the top of the Blue Mountians, and his passion for long-distance motor cycling. Expecting a studious, aggressively serious member of the militant black avant garde, that evening was something of a revelation.

Now 45, the father of four girls and two boys, Bowie looks a picture of health and lives in Brooklyn, which he describes as "almost like Kingston, Jamaica". He now tries to limit his tours to take up no more than six months of the year and his large home is always the focus of one rehearsal or another. "I'm always

practising," says Bowie with a grin. "In fact I got a whole scene 'n' all, all I have to do is go downstairs in the morning."

LESTER BOWIE'S MUSICAL credentials are impeccable. During the 50s and early 60s he paid his road dues with bands led by soulsters Jerry Butler, Gene Chandler, Jackie Wilson and Joe Tex and by bluesmen Albert King and Little Milton. He did session work for Chess Records but back on his home turf in St Louis, he, along with alto player Oliver Lake and drummer Phillip Wilson, had a reputation for 'smoking cats' (outplaying), whether it was bebop or free jazz. Lake and Bowie's trombone-playing brother Joseph, more recently of Defunkt notoriety, were founder members of the St Louis equivalent of the AACM, the Black Artists Group. In 1966 Lester Bowie moved to Chicago, became involved in the AACM and it was there he met Roscoe Mitchell, Joseph Jarman and Malachi Favors. The Art Ensemble of Chicago was born.

To say that the Art Ensemble were in those early days prolific borders on understatement. During their first tour of Europe, they recorded enough material for 15 albums plus two film scores, one of which (*Les Stances A Sophie*) was eventually released.

Chicago was an extremely hot and dangerous place to hang out during the swinging 60s in America. It was Mayor Daley's town and he wasn't averse to calling out the National Guard ruthlessly to crush any form of dissent that might emerge on his manner. If you were against the Vietnam war, pro-Black Power or Civil Rights, a student or a hippy who smoked pot, then you were always liable to get tear gassed or your head bust. That tidal wave of rebellious optimism which confronted the repressive Nixon regime had its own manifestations in music that reflected a radicalised, militant and creative consciousness. The Art Ensemble were part of that.

They shunned the tag of jazz, opting to call it "Great Black Music - From Ancient To Future". Like Son Ra they were rooted in tradition, switching from blues to experiment with swing and bebop, and their constant search for new areas of expression led them to employ a mind-boggling array of instruments - from a bass saxophone to tuned hucups - and embark upon blistering attacks of free playing. As they enter their third decade the Art Ensemble are still challenging the boundaries.

Each member of the group has pursued his own projects, solo ventures, or worked with 'other line-ups'. Things have changed since the early 70s when Bowie's notoriety on horn was limited to Chicago and Paris, and Miles Davis reputedly offered to punch him out as a way of Lester attracting more attention.

By the mid-70s he'd worked with Archie Shepp and Jimmy Lyons and he cut two albums as group leader for Muse records, *Fast Last* and *Rope A Dope*. Both covered a range of material that highlighted his comedic flair combined with a reverence for the past and continued experimentation. In 1978/9 his quintet, which enlisted the services of Black Arthur Blythe, Amina Myers, Phillip Wilson and Malachi Favors, put out the excellent *Fifth Power* and *African Children*. Improvising Artists Inc. also released the fascinating *Dust* album featuring Bowie and Phillip Wilson. Throughout the 80s Bowie seems to have found a consistent outlet for his music at Manfred Eicher's ECM.

Twenty years ago the *Melody Maker* noted the arrival of Fontella Bass (of 'Rescue Me' fame) in Britain and that she was "accompanied by her husband, coloured trumpet player, Lester Bowie". Today there still seems to be precious little interest in him or his music. Only *Wire* and *NME* were interested in meeting the man. So much for the 'jazz revival' eh?

Casually dressed, Bowie twisted the strands of his beard, armed himself with a huge Fidel-style cigar and relaxed into an armchair. He clearly had much to say, especially about the new generation of musicians who have emerged from Art Blakey's Messengers and their supposed defence of the tradition.

But first, what about the Brass Fantasy band?

"The idea for the Brass Fantasy goes back 15 to 20 years now," asserts Bowie. "An all-brass group with no saxophones, no keyboards... all brass. You see, brass was overshadowed by the sax for a while in jazz, at least the brass players didn't keep up when the saxophone players started stretching out. It started with Bird and when Coltrane and Dolphy started extending the sonic thing, extending the whole thing rhythmically, the trumpet players kinda stayed conservative. I wanted to do something to show things you wouldn't normally associate with the trumpet."

"I got an invitation from a classical festival in Germany to do whatever we wanted... here's the money, we'll fly you all over... this was my opportunity, so I called some brass players, friends of mine, and we started rehearsing. We got a good reaction from our initial gigs so we stayed with it."

"It's expensive to carry a nine-piece band around Europe but we still never play the States as much as here. We do a few things, the Newport Jazz Festival... we played DC before we came, but here in Europe we play almost every day. Austria tomorrow, Italy after that, but we haven't got that kind of acceptance in the States 'cause people haven't gotten to hear it! Once this tour is completed we go off to our respective jobs, other guys

have groups or are working with other people. But it's essentially a group that can only be together if people want to work together."

Ironical or what? Bowie has long battled against the institutionalised racism of the white American establishment which he defines as anti-culture and anti-creativity. I asked if he'd ever put parameters on his music to gain acceptance.

"I play whatever I feel like playing, without any constraints, that was the whole idea. The music is growing and we have to expand to other boundaries, look to other influences. This is 1986, a hundred years ago we could never get to hear the music of Greece or Russia... or the music of the Himalayas, but today I can just press a button on a computer or put a cassette in a machine. This in turn requires another reaction from me. Since I have all this information, we have to have an art that reflects it."

"You have to play what relates to you. The doo wop tunes on the Brass Fantasy albums are the music of my youth. I came up with the generation that invented rock 'n' roll. For us it wasn't Gershwin, it was the Platters. Instead of Rodgers and Hammerstein it was Buck Ram."

"At that same time I believe a split occurred in the jazz community. It started to divide and get closed in. I mean, Art Blakey could've done something with 'The Great Pretender' but none of the jazz guys did anything with the contemporary music of the day. Part of what we're about is interpreting the contemporary scene. On top of that I've always liked the music. I liked the way it sounded, felt and what it meant, and I like the reaction I get from people now when I play it. It's a lot of fun, trying to reinterpret all that... evoke that same MOOD, without saying a word, and at the same time continue. Hopefully we're successful."

JUDGING BY THE response of the eclectic Town and Country Club crowd, Brass Fantasy have achieved just that. Watching couples hugging up to their version of Whitney Houston's "Savin' All My Love For You", or hearing the cheers for Willie Nelson's "Crazy" and the classic "I Only Have Eyes For You", it struck me that this was the nearest I'd get to hearing a big band '86 style.

The playing by the whole group was both individually inspiring and collectively awesome - unbelievably powerful. The rhythm section of Bob Stewart on tuba and Phillip Wilson on trap drums propelled the music along relentlessly, and while Bowie refused to single out any musician individually, describing them all as "excellent", Steve Turre's contribution on trombone was dazzling. Like most others in the group Turre and Bowie go way back - back to the days

when "Steve was weighing 150 lbs", says Lester, falling about with laughter.

Much of our conversation is punctuated by bouts of laughter. There's no doubt the man possesses a wicked sense of humour. Who else could parody George Clinton's "P Funk" or write a song entitled "No Shut", both of which appear on their *Asant Pop LP*?

"Unfortunately we didn't get to play 'No Shut' last night," reflected Bowie. "But the way it works on stage is to inject humour into the programme 'cause we want people to go through a range of emotions. I don't like an audience that just sits there, listening so seriously, no one smiles. I like people to holler and scream, do whatever they want. There are times they can be quiet and listen to something very thoughtful but not the whole evening. I have to enjoy this too, otherwise I couldn't do it. I've got to have some fun."

"Humour is a part of life," stressed Lester. "It's part of the tradition, that's why it's in the music. It's like life without humour, where you never release any of that tension and nothing was ever funny... and it was always this very serious type of thing. I don't want to be part of anything like that. Look, you can hear the humour in Duke Ellington or Miles

he could be so satirical, so ironic, you can see the humour in Dizzy.

"I've been reading about these young guys talking about they're upholding the tradition and I'm getting tired of hearing it. It's getting to the point where it's making me mad. Where do these guys get off coming up and not upholding the tradition of respecting their elders? Where does Wynton get off saying anything about Miles? Where could I get off saying anything about Miles and I've got a son Wynton's age? How would it look if I said, 'Miles wasn't making it any more'? No one's ever done it like that, no one's ever come up disrespecting their elders in the profession.

"Miles never said Diz wasn't shut, Diz didn't say that Roy Eldridge was washed up or I didn't see Roy saying, 'Shut, Louis' finished." It's never been that, it's always been a tradition of respect. If these gentlemen are going to uphold tradition they've got to uphold all the traditions."

Tradition features at all levels in the music. Watching the Brass Fantasy attired in white satin zoot suits complete with tacky key chains was obviously a statement on style with more than a hint of humour.

"Yeah, that's part of the tradition too. It was my idea, we have three sets of uniforms and if we'd have done a full set last night we'd have changed entirely for the second set. There's a whole tradition of style. If you ever saw Duke Ellington, that band set the style

... Calloway and those guys. If you've got these guys in some old time business suits, not even modern suits, talking about the

tradition it's just ridiculous."

Having confessed I enjoyed *J Mood*, Wynton's latest album, I did concede that his polemics and academicism gave the music an air of conservatism.

"You see, they're using the concept of tradition to destroy the tradition," quipped Lester. "When you're talking about tradition it's more than a style, more than a method of playing, more than a tempo... it's a whole life. What about the tradition of creativity, innovation, spirituality, individuality and personality? You don't hear any of that in Wynton's music, so he's not upholding any tradition. Like Miles said, that's over, it's never going to be 1955 again. Guys like Wynton - we call them 'Androids'."

"Wynton is a media darling. It's like the media have pulled the wool over everyone's eyes. This is the first time any musician achieved prominence, I mean, number one trumpet player without even developing a style. I've never seen anyone in that *doo-wop* Top Five that was just copying someone else, I can't see how anybody would go for that.

When I was coming up in Chicago, if you played like someone else people would say, 'He's OK, he just doesn't have it together yet.'"

"The guys who've gone through Blakey's group... and I love Art Blakey, he's like an institution, they've got to realise that it's not the end of the world, it's like a school or college and you've got to go on after that."

"I'm looking for young musicians, it's hard to find them but I know they're there," continued Bowie. "Most of the ones I've heard are like I've said, androids. I've always thought that Terence Blanchard had potential but he's getting worse, he's sounding more like Wynton. I have a theory that maybe these people are bionic, they're not real... humanoid (laughs)."

"I like Greg Oby, alto player and Terry Lene Carrington, she's come out of the same school, but she's more forward and progressive. But one of my favourite trumpet players is Olu Dara. He's great, he's developed an independent style of his own but he doesn't get no recognition. He's definitely one of the most underrated trumpet players in the business. To come through and develop your own style is really difficult, believe me. I remember times I used to listen to Freddie and used to wonder, what can I do? Freddie, you're not leaving anything for the rest of us to do (laughs). So you have to find your own way and to do that you have to search yourself."

"You see, you don't have any places where guys get together and play. The Loft Scene was the last scene in New York where people played together. I'm not talking about going to a club and sitting in on a jam session, waitin' in line; I'm talking about a private

situation where you get up and go over there in the morning and you play all day and all night, without an audience, without people to pay you. You just get together 'cause you're researching. I don't see that any more but I'm looking for that in New York. I've been asking these young guys where they get together and play and they say, nowhere. So I say, well, maybe that's why you sound like that."

Bowie breaks off into a gale of laughter. But behind the derisory comments lies a serious concern for which he and others have dedicated themselves. As the Art Ensemble enter their third decade I asked what lessons were to be learned.

"Our answer was to band together but for the young musicians coming through it's got to be more than that," answered Lester. "It's the same thing as when we were coming up, nobody wanted to hear that extension of the music so we organised and made it work. We made ourselves succeed and made sure we were going to be around 20 years later, but it was our decision as there was no one to discover us."

"The big record companies tried to deny us and everything but we still built this audience. One of the successes of the Art Ensemble is that we attract all kinds of people. Some bring their kids to see the instruments and little bells and things, you get senior citizens who remember how it used to be, others are into the artistic side and you get the rock 'n' rollers. This group, the Brass Fantasy, half our audience has green hair, the other half are over 70 years old (laughs)."

"All the groups we work in operate in a very organised manner. We don't waste our time, we go from group to group and bring the experiences we learn in Brass Fantasy back to the Art Ensemble and vice versa. It keeps us growing, keeps us alert."

I finally ask him if there's anyone in the world he'd still like to play with?

"Art Blakey," he says with a huge grin. "Not really work with him but I'd like to play with him. I enjoy playing with the older guys 'cause they're worried too. They're like me, they're saying, what's happening? I played at the Duke Ellington memorial concert with Duke's old guys, Rex Stewart, Cootie Williams and they really liked it. They would never have got to hear me any other way so I enjoy playing with guys like that."

"That collective way of working, that's how we've managed to stay alive. I hope all these young musicians, who've got all this talent, look inside themselves and realise the importance of carrying on the real tradition and come up with something new. Other than that we're an endangered species. I mean, we can't depend on something outside to enhance the music and keep it growing."

"We are the practitioners of the art and it's our obligation to keep it alive."

ALL  
THESE  
CHAPS  
FIGURE  
SOMEWHERE  
IN  
OUR  
QUO.



# THE 1986 CHRISTMAS QUIZ

HERE IT IS — your annual chance to torture your jazz memory in our unrivalled brainteaser. All the answers are on page 78, together with your rating system. Our publisher scored only 18 out of a possible 50 — see what you can do.

## 1. Who are these characters better known as?

- (a) SONNY BLOUNT
- (b) WILLIAM EVANS
- (c) CURTIS PORTER

## 2. Who composed these?

- (a) THE WIRE
- (b) EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US IS A PEARL
- (c) RUFUS SWUNG HIS FACE AT LAST TO THE WIND THEN HIS NECK SNAPPED
- (d) LOVELEVELELOQUI
- (e) EZZ-THETH
- (f) JAZZ DEATH!

## 3. Who nominally led these bands?

- (a) BLUE DEVILS
- (b) HOT SEVEN
- (c) NEED-MORE BAND
- (d) BLUE FOUR

## 4. What countries are these independent jazz record companies based in?

- (a) BHVAAST
- (b) REID
- (c) ODIN

## 5. Who are these quotes usually attributed to?

- (a) "IT'S MOUSE MUSIC, MAN"
- (b) "MUSIC MUST AT TIMES TERRIFY"
- (c) "THERE'S TWO TYPES OF MUSIC — GOOD AND BAD."

## 6. Who released LPs under these titles?

- (a) MALLETS A FORETHOUGHT
- (b) SUR-REAL SAXOPHONE
- (c) AS I LIVE AND BOP
- (d) LONE-LIE
- (e) MARTYANS COME BACK

## 7. Name six bassists who've recorded with Ornette Coleman (one point each).

## 8. Name the theme tune associated with these big bands:

- (a) TOMMY DORNEY
- (b) ARTIE SHAW
- (c) HUNNY BERGAN
- (d) DUKE ELLINGTON
- (e) CHARLIE BARNET

## 9. Complete these tune titles, each with a Christian name:

- (a) SO LONG, .
- (b) OPEN THE DOOR, .
- (c) GO AHEAD, .

## 10. Where are or were these famous jazz venues?

- (a) SWEET BANE
- (b) THE HALF NOTE
- (c) BEM TOUN
- (d) CAFE MONTMARTRE
- (e) KINXTON KORNER

## 11. Pick the odd one out of these groupings:

- (a) CLARK TERRY, COOTIE WILLIAMS, THAD JONES, WHITE COOK
- (b) ADRIAN ROLLINS, ROSE OF MITCHELL, HARRY GOLD, DEXTER GORDON
- (c) JOHNNY GRIFFIN, DAVID M HINSTER, BENNY GORDON, STANLEY TURRENTINE

## 12. Which musicians had these nicknames?

- (a) RABBIT
- (b) FROG
- (c) KROOK
- (d) GROOM

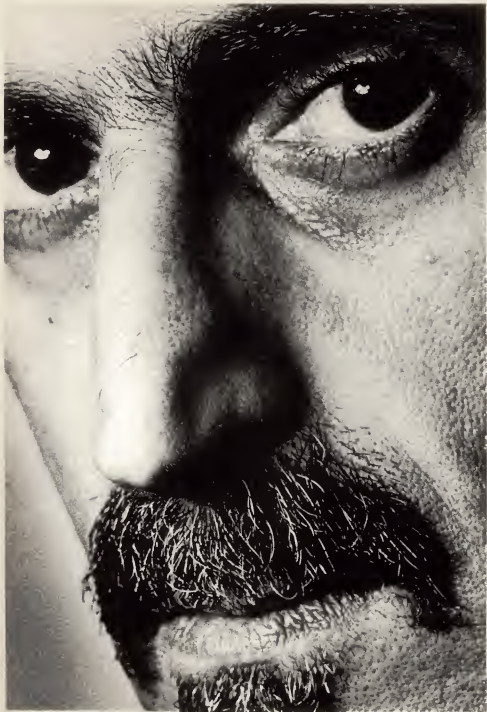
## WIN A PASSPORT TO JAZZ ERUDITION

If YOU DIDN'T do so well on the quiz, there's two alternatives: send for a set of WIRE back issues immediately, or enter our competition! Just answer the three dead easy posers below, send the solution in to WIRE HQ on a postcard marked "BOOK PRIZE" — and you could win one of the 15 copies of THE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAZZ which we have to give away. Written by BRIAN CANE, STAN BRITT and CHERRIE MURRAY, this tome should be in every jazz home. All answers received will go into the WIRE barrel and the first 15 correct cards picked on MONDAY 22 DECEMBER will each get a copy of the book. So get your answers in soon!

## 1. What was Duke Ellington's first name?

## 2. Who was "Bird"?

## 3. By what name is John Birks Gillespie better known?





F R A N K Z A P P A

## The All American Composer

WORDS: STEVE LYONS AND BATYA FRIEDMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: DEREK RIDGERS

FROM THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION TO THE  
SOLITUDE OF THE SYNCLAVER: A  
CONVERSATION WITH THE MORAL VOICE OF  
MODERN MUSIC.

IMAGINE IT IS 1966 and you are 25 years old, living in Los Angeles, California. Folk rock is happening, the British sound is happening. You're watching who's making it in the L.A. music scene. They either look and sound like the Byrds or look and sound like Gerry and the Pacemakers. Then you look at a copy of *Frank's Out* released in 1966, the first album by Frank Zappa and the Mothers Of Invention. You know you're in trouble just by looking at the weird photo on the front. Where's the cuteness? Where's the darling boy with hair of golden fleece? You put the record on and your worst fears are confirmed. Where are the love songs? Where is the tight vocal harmony? Even the names of the songs indicate a peculiar content: "Wowie Zowie", "Who Are The Brain Police", and "The Return Of The Son Of Monster Magnet". This music doesn't just fill the air, it attacks it like enemy territory and sets up base camp. You can't help but agree with a very important man at Columbia Records whose prognosis for *Frank's Out* was: "No Commercial Potential".

Now imagine 1967. Haight-Ashbury is happening. Acid, hippies, *Sergeant Pepper*, peace and love is happening. Making it on the music scene is synonymous with getting psychedelic. Then look at *We're Only In It For The Money*, the album released that year by Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention. Note that the album cover makes complete mockery of the sacred *Sergeant Pepper* album. Furthermore, the songs ridicule nearly all aspects of the alternative youth culture, calling hippies phoney and drugs stupid. Not

exactly the sort of thing to endear Zappa to 1967 FM underground radio.

Now it is 1968. The music scene is evolving into a big-business, big-money industry. Zappa is honoured with an invitation to perform before all the big-wigs of the music industry at the Grammy Awards; a perfect opportunity to get exposure before some Very Important People. Zappa's opening statement goes something like this: This must be the least enjoyable night of the year for you, when you have to sit there and endure the crap you perpetrate on the American public the rest of the year. Then the Mothers play their selection for the evening: a demented version of "Satin Doll".

And in 1986 Frank Zappa continues to follow his own set of rules. He is a self-taught musician. He accepts nothing at face value, including those people who say they accept nothing at face value. Few other artists can match Zappa's productivity. He has released over 40 albums, including several double albums, and produced a score of other musicians' records. His accomplishments include 32 compositions for choral and orchestral groups, four ballets, two feature-length films and two television specials. Zappa recently was "the rage" in France following the debut performance of several of his new works for chamber orchestra conducted by Pierre Boulez. While his symphonic music was performed here and abroad, Zappa was busy with his rock and roll band on a US and European tour. They performed in over 20 countries in a whirlwind six-month tour. And while his band was hitting the concert halls, his new book *Therapy For Us* was

hitting the presses.

Most recently Zappa took it upon himself to battle the parents' group which is demanding that records be rated just like movies. He has toured the country debating this issue on radio and television and testified before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

This interview took place in his home studio, from 11 o'clock at night until sunrise the next morning. Zappa is a disarmingly thoughtful, lucid and witty individual, and rather warm in his own way.

### ON ART IN AMERICA

LaF: In the past you have said that "art is dying in this country". What do you mean by this?

FZ: Much of the creative work I find interesting and amusing has no basis in economic reality. Most decisions relevant to expenditures for what gets produced and distributed are made strictly on a bottom-line basis. Nobody makes a move without talking to their accountant first. There will always be people who will take a chance, but their numbers are dwindling. Those who are crazy enough to take the chance on spending money to make some unusual object or event take place are an endangered species. The spirit of adventurousness at any level of American society has been pretty

much legislated away.

In the 80s, with a repressive Republican, Yuppie-oriented administration installed and ready to perpetuate itself with Supreme Court appointments that will keep us in trouble for the next half century, the prognosis is not good for things which differ from the



viewpoint of the conservative right.

*Do you think anything can be done to reverse the trend?*

Perhaps. I tend to view the whole thing as a conspiracy. It is no accident that the public schools in the United States are pure shit. It is no accident that masses of drugs are available and openly used at all levels of society. In a way, the real business of government is the business of controlling the labour force.

Social pressure is placed on people to become a certain type of individual, and then rewards are heaped on people who conform to that stereotype. Take the pop music business, for example. Look at the stereotypes held up by the media as examples of great accomplishment. You see guys who are making millions of dollars and selling millions of units. And because they are making and selling millions they are stamped with the seal of approval, and it is the millions which make their work quality. Yet anyone can look at what is being done and say, "Jesus, I can do that!" You celebrate mediocrity, you get mediocrity.

Few people who do anything excellent are ever heard of. You know why? Because excellence, pure excellence, terrifies the fuck out of Americans because they've been bred to appreciate the success of the mediocre. People don't wish to be reminded that lurking somewhere there are people who can do some shit you can't do. They can think a way you can't think, they can run a way you can't run, they can dance a way you can't dance. They are excellent. You aren't excellent. Most Americans aren't excellent, they're only OK. And so, to keep them happy as a labour force you say, "OK, let's take this mediocre chump and we say 'He is terrific!'" All the other mediocre chumps say, "Yeah, that's right and that gives me hope, because one day as mediocre and chumpish as I am I can..." It's smart labour relations.

*If you would focus on the message of pop music for a moment, what do you see as the issues of the 1980s that music can address?*

What can music address today? It can address anything that it wants to, but it will only address those topics that will sell. Musicians will not address topics that are controversial if they want to have a hit. So music will continue to address those things that really matter to people who buy records: boy-girl relationships, boy-boy relationships, boy-cat relationships, girl-cat relationships, boy-girl-food relationships perhaps. But safe. Every once in a while somebody will say "War is Hell" or "Save the Whales" or something bland. But if you talk about pop music as a medium for expressing social attitudes, the medium expresses the social attitude perfectly

by avoiding contact with things that are really there. That is the telling point about the society that is consuming the product. If society wanted to hear information of a specific nature in songs, about controversial topics, they would buy them. But they don't. You are talking about a record-buying audience which is interested in their personal health and well-being, their ability to earn a living, their ability to stay young at all costs for ever, and not much else.

*How about the role of music in society outside the pop music industry? For example, Kurt Nagano (the conductor of the Berkeley symphony) said in a recent interview that, "A composer has a job to do without a culture. Which is not to say a composer should write what the public already wants to hear, but rather that the public is employing the composer to lead them, to show them a direction." What do you think of that?*

I don't think a composer has any function in society at all, especially in an industrial society, unless it is writing movie scores, advertising jingles, or stuff that is consumed by industry. I respect Kent, however. I think he takes a very optimistic and naïve attitude toward what it takes to be a composer. If you walk down the street and ask anybody if a composer is of any use to any society, what kind of answer do you think you would get? I mean, nobody gives a shit. If you decide to become a composer, you seriously run the risk of becoming less than a human being. Who the fuck needs you?

A songwriter is different. [In a *factious* song-song interview.] You write a nice song, then you're important. Because with a song, now we have a car, now we have love, now we have a this... but a composer? What the fuck do they do? All the good music's already been written by people with wigs and stuff on. So, the public doesn't need composers. What about composers? Do they need a public? For example, Milton Babbitt, in an essay entitled "Who Cares If You Listen?" has advocated the virtual exclusion of the general public from modern music concerts. What is your opinion on that?

That's unnecessary, they're already excluded; they don't go! Have you been to a modern music concert? Plenty of room, isn't there? Come on Milton, give yourself a break. I hope you're not going to spend money trying to exclude these people. What are you going to do, have it legislated in Congress like those assholes who wanted to make it a law that you couldn't put anything backwards on a phonograph record?

*So, given all of this, what do you think art will be like 20 years from now?*

Since I'm not in that business, it's hard for me to really care. [Zappa does not think that his work is perceived as art.] I can lament in

passing. I don't think anything that a reasonable person would describe as art is going to be around. Not here, I'm talking about art in terms of valued, beautiful stuff that is done not because of your ego but just because it is beautiful, just because it is the right thing to do. We will be told what is good and it will be mediocre. There's always a possibility that an anomaly will appear — some weird little twisted thing will happen and there will be somebody who's doing it. But who's going to know? In the dark ages there was art, but who knew?

## ON THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

*How do unknown groups attract the attention of record companies?*

Today record companies don't even listen to your tape. They look at your publicity photo. They look at your hair. They look at your zippers. How gay do you look? And if you've got the look then it really doesn't make a bit of difference what's on the tape — they can always hire somebody to fix that. And they don't expect you to be around for 20 years. The business is not interested in developing artists. They want that "fast buck" because they realise that next week there's going to be another hairdo and another zipper. And they realise that the people are not listening, they're dancing. Or they're driving, or something else. The business is more geared toward expendability today. That's because merchandising is so tied to "visuals" now.

*How is music selected to be heard on pop radio? Is it determined by the taste of the listener or does the public listen to whatever the industry feeds them?*

A little of both. Radio is consumed like wallpaper is consumed. You don't concentrate on the radio, you turn it on while you're working, you turn it on while you're driving. It's not like the old days when families sat around and looked at it.

So the stations are formatted to provide a certain texture and ambience that will be consumed by people who view themselves in a certain way. Are you a Yuppie? Well, you're going to listen to a certain texture because that reinforces the viewpoint you have of yourself and the viewpoint you want to project to other people of who and what you are.

*Could you give us your view of the process whereby a record becomes a hit?*

It's simple. It's called "payola". You pay somebody to play your record.

Hits are OK. I think they're wonderful for people who want them. They're wonderful for people who like to listen to them. But then, hits shouldn't be the sum total of music history. Let's face it, Mozart had hits. Beethoven had hits. Did you ever look in the

*Grove's Dictionary Of Music And Musicians?* There are thousands of names of people who wrote music throughout history yet we haven't heard one line they ever wrote. That doesn't mean it is bad music. It just means they didn't have hits.

In the old days, if the king didn't like you or the church didn't like you or whatever, you didn't have a hit. As a matter of fact you might even be dead. So now you can have a hit if you are willing to pay. So who's the new king? Who's the new church?

#### ON THE OL' DAYS

*You have said that there's nothing about the 60s that you miss. But during the run at the Garrick Theatre in New York in '67 there seemed to be an excitement and spontaneity in your concerts that would be hard to capture now. Do you miss the "anything might happen" adventure of those concerts?*

That was not so much a series of concerts as a long-running engagement in the theatre, which means you do things different than you would do in a concert situation. It was also being performed for an audience that differs greatly from any other audience anywhere else on the planet. The New York audience is special, it's a different bunch of people there. And also, at the time that we showed up, we were so out of phase with everything that was happening in the city. It was great just to be totally astride. You could do anything. And because they were New Yorkers, they would at least *consider* it. You couldn't do that in Hollywood. You couldn't do it in Paris. You couldn't do it in London.

*You had a fairly regular audience there too.*

There were some kids, by the time the show closed, they were crying. I would talk with them outside the theatre. A couple of guys were there 40 times; they had the ticket stubs to prove it. They were there all the time. They just loved it so much. I saw one of them in the audience when we were working in the Palladium in 1980 or '81. He was in the front row. His name is Mark Trotter. He was all grown up.

*Was he waving?*

No, he wasn't waving. I recognised him. And I said, "It's you!" Mark used to come to the Garrick Theatre concerts with a friend of his. We called them Loeb and Leopold. Their idea of a good time was one guy would get up and run screaming down the aisle and run to the stage screaming and screaming and screaming like he was insane and would come up on the stage and I would give him a microphone and he would take it and he would scream at the top of his lungs into our horrible little PA system and fall in a heap on the floor and then I would spit coca-cola all over his body. That's

what he wanted me to do! We did it several times.

We had some regulars. Louie the Turkey was regular. He's that guy on *Lampy Gravy* with a cackling laugh. He would come in there. I'd hear him laughing in the back of the room. I'd say "He's here, Louie the Turkey, he's here." His real name was Louis Cuneo. "Bring him down." And he would come onto the stage and I'd put him on a stool and hand him a microphone. And we'd just do nothing, and he would laugh... he would just sit there and laugh. And the entire audience would break up! After five minutes, give him a big round of applause. He'd go back, "Thanks a lot Louie. And now..."

But anyway, this Loeb and Leopold thing, I saw this guy sitting in the audience. I said "It's you! Would you care to come onto the stage?"

*And have coca-cola spit on you?*

He declined because he had gotten beyond that stage and now he was a record distributor in Queens. But as far as missing that kind of spontaneity, that wasn't so much a product of what the 60s were, as it was a product of what New York was at that time. We came from California and everybody in California was all dressed up. There were freaks. In San Francisco they were all dressed up as Gay 90s and cowboys and everything was in clothing-style fantasy land. We went to New York; they weren't. They hardly had any long hair back there. The people who came to the show were mostly Jewish middle-class boys with short hair from the suburbs. That was the bulk of our audience at that time. The weirdest it got was maybe on the weekend they'd wear a headband. These were suburban kids, not the wildest freaks in the world. They were guys who would grow up to take over their fathers' garment businesses. And that's what that audience was. And they liked it, I don't know why, but they really did.

*Was there a difference in the acceptance of your art here and in Europe?*

We have a large audience over there simply because we've been there a large number of times. But also because of this strange quirk. In Germany, for example, when *Absolutely Free* was released (1967), people somehow got the idea that I was an anti-American artist. Because I would say things that were critical of American society, they would say "Das ist gut!" That was during the days of the SDS. So I wind up having to explain to these guys that I'm an "All American Boy". I may say things about the United States that you might

agree with, but you're agreeing for the wrong reasons. I think America's the greatest place that ever could be. It's not that fabulous right now. It's got some emotional and psychological problems. But I wouldn't live anywhere else. So it's difficult to spend years explaining that over and over again to somebody who says they like you, but they're liking you for twisted reasons. And it varies from country to country why they like you.

For example, the biggest-selling single we ever had, anywhere in the world, was in Scandinavia. It was the largest-selling single in CBS's history there. You know what it was? "Bobby Brown." It was a disco hit. Think of it. Picture a disco in Norway with people dancing to "Bobby Brown". College students got cassettes of it and hooked up speakers in their cars and drove through town blaring this song. It was unreal. And then it went from Scandinavia, a year later, to be a hit in Germany. Not quite with the same rabidity. And you could never even play the record on the air in the United States.

*Does it bother you that you're misunderstood?*

Who's understood? Are you understood? What do you expect out of life?

*Speaking of Germany, how did the title of the song "Holiday In Berlin" originate?*

"Holiday In Berlin" refers to a note we had at the Sport Palace in Berlin in 1968.

*A riot caused by your concert?*

No, it was caused by the SDS. What happened was during the sound check in the afternoon a bunch of student rebels came to the sound check and said they wanted to talk to me. I listened to them, and they said (in fraudulent German accent), "You know there will be 8,000 people here tonight and they have never demonstrated before, and we want you to tell them to come with us." I said, "Really, where are you going?" And they said (in mysterious voice), "It's a cold night." And I said, "Oh, you're going to make it warm, eh?" Like "We are going to start a fire." I said, "Well, where?" "Around the corner," was the answer. You know what was around the corner? NATO Command Headquarters! They wanted me to tell the audience to go with them to start a fire. Are you getting the picture? So I told the guy, "You have had mental health." And he didn't like it.

So that night they came back, 200 of them, and they had jars of paint, cherry bombs, boners, they made a mess out of the fucking show. And there were 20 to 30 German policemen who refused to even show them-





selves during this thing, and we had to play for two hours: two one-hour segments with an intermission. So during the show these guys were doing their best to make a mess out of things. So we take our intermission, we go back stage, and they figure they've run us off. They went on to the stage. They had wire cutters, they cut the wires to a bunch of the equipment. It was really pretty obnoxious, so we surprised them. We came back and played the second half of the show. They were so stunned that they shut up. Our roadies glued things back together and we kept playing. Toward the end of the show they figured this is their last chance to get the audience to go with them, so the student leader leaps onto the stage and grabs the microphone and starts babbling away in German. So in order to keep him from doing what he was going to do, I gave Don Preston instructions to put our electric organ through a fuzz-tone and put both arms on the keyboard. You know what that sounds like — that's an ugly fucking sound.

And meanwhile our road crew, such as it was, was carrying instruments off of the stage one at a time. I made my guitar feedback, and it's just me and Preston making ugly noises and this guy going like that [pantomimes someone screaming]. And at the end we both unplugged our stuff and walked off and just left him there babbling. That was "Holiday In Berlin".

## • ON COMPOSING

*As you compose, are you primarily guided by how you want the music to affect a listener's spiritual, emotional, intellectual or physical state, or by the musical structure — melody, harmony and rhythm?*

None of the above. It's more like, how did it turn out. Does it work? And if it works you don't even have to know why it works. It either works or it doesn't work.

It's like drawing a picture. Maybe there are too many fingers on one hand, and a foot is too short over there. Or you could apply it to a recipe; maybe you've got too much salt over here. Or you could apply it to the design of a building. Did you forget to put in a toilet, or are there enough windows on the second floor? Those are examples of pragmatic considerations as opposed to aesthetic considerations.

I don't know how to explain it. I just do it. It's not based on any academic regulations. If you take a blank piece of paper and a pencil and just start sketching on there, it doesn't necessarily have to be a house and a tree and a cow. It could be just some kind of a scribble but sometimes those scribbles work and they are the right thing for that blank piece of space and you can enjoy them. Or you can say, "That's not a house, that's not a cow, that's

not a tree, and so I don't like it; it's just a scribble." It depends on what your viewpoint is.

*Is your view truly as subjective as you are painting it to be? So, if I look at an image and it appeals to me, then all I can say is that it works for me and I can't say any more about it.*

What else do you have the right to say? If you go beyond that, you become a critic. Who needs those fuckers.

*Other people might say that there's some sort of... Spiritual...*

*Universal or some other sort of consensus agreement about what works and what doesn't.*

People are free to agree. If you want to join a committee and feel the warmth and reassurance that other people's opinions will provide to reinforce your own, then go for it. I happen to not care for that. It's not something that I aspire to, nor do I want to live my life in accordance with that ideal. In fact, I despise it. But it's okay for other people. There's no reason why I should inflict my point of view on somebody who really enjoys being part of a group consensus.

*So you hesitate to make any value judgements on any given discipline. What about the relative merit of various human pursuits? For example, do you consider jogging or playing ice hockey to be of equal value to, say, creating art, or some cosmic scale?*

No.

*Why? What's the scale?*

Do you have appreciation for ancient civilisation?

Yes.

What is it that survives from an ancient civilisation that characterises that civilisation? What do you find? Not their jogging! The music doesn't survive, but things that are related to art do. The beautiful things that the societies do is the thing that survives. Let's look into the future. Let's look at the remnants of the American society.

*Wait a second, ugly things survive too.*

Yep. That's what will survive the American society!

*We'd like to shift the conversation now to the emotional content of your music. What do you mean when you speak of the emotional content of music? For example, you applaud Gustav Slim and Johnny Guitart Watson for the raw emotional energy of their music. Yes, you seem to have little tolerance for emotional love songs.*

It's quite a challenge to reach somebody emotionally without using words that have literal connections. To perform expressively on an instrument, I have respect for that. To get to the level of performance where you are

no longer thinking about operating a piece of machinery and can just project something emotional through the machinery, that is worthy of respect.

Writing a song about why somebody left you, that's stupid. The performers and composers don't necessarily believe in what they're saying or what they're doing, but they know that if you write a song about love, it's got a 3000 percent better chance of going on the radio than if you write a song about celery. It's a buy and sell. And so the value system builds up from that.

What I think of as the emotional content of music is probably a lot different than what you think of. Since I write music I know what the technicians are. If I wanted to write something that would make you weep, I could do it. There's stuff that you stick in there. There's ways to do it. It's a cheap shot.

*Would you say it's sentimental?*

It's not just sentimental. There are certain harmonic climates that you can build. There are certain notes of a scale that you can play within a harmonic climate to "wreak havoc", and it's very predictable. The average guy doesn't know how predictable or easy it is to do that stuff, if you just look at it scientifically, you can do it.

For example, you've got the key, it's A minor, right? And you're going to play a line of Bs in the key of A minor and that's going to give you that little twinge. Well, that music played on an accordion is not the same as the exact same notes and the same melody and the same rhythm played on six bagpipes. It's a different story. So the timbre is involved, too. And the amplitude is involved. If that A minor chord is very quiet and the Bs are just smoothly put in there, that's one attitude. If it's being played by a high school marching band and it's being jammed in your face, it's sad alright, but it's not that kind of sad!

In different cultures there are also different norms for how certain sound combinations are perceived. That's why if you listen to Chinese classical music, everything sounds like it's being played on a kazoo and it's thin and weird, but to a Chinese person it's lush. I don't know why a person

would think that the tone quality of Chinese classical music was really a warming sensarinn. The Chinese are different though. They've got seven thousand years behind them. Maybe after seven thousand years we're going to think that stuff sounds pretty good, too.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 78





# Thanks for the Memory

WORDS: STUART NICHOLSON

PHOTOGRAPHY: UNKNOWN

A HISTORY OF THE BOP BARITONE IN TRIUMPH AND ADVERSITY.

DRUG ADDICTION was the scourge of the bop movement. The stark statistics were appalling: 50 to 75 per cent of the bop players had experience of drugs, a quarter to a third were seriously addicted and as many as 20 per cent were killed by their addiction.<sup>1</sup> But the strength of the music usually transcended what has been euphemistically dubbed "personal problems".

Usually, because in the case of the brilliant bop baritone saxophonist Serge Chaloff, his extra-mural activities in the twilight world of drug addiction relegated him to the dubious status of a sort of non-person in jazz. The reason was simple. It was what Chaloff called his "nine years of living hell"<sup>2</sup> – the period of his addiction that ended in 1955. During that time, both as addict and pusher, his interpersonal relationships degenerated in chaos, and damaged more people than just himself. When he did finally kick the habit and reach the creative peak of his career he was never able to live down his unsavoury reputation. An unequivocal report on his comeback, after years of treatment and recuperation noted: "The most subtle, yet the most telling indication of those problems was the reaction of other musicians to him. In the case system which jazz musicians automatically form, Serge had every right to expect consideration and respect. But it should have been evident in these last years that he has received little of either, and that, in its queer way, was the final stamp of disapproval."<sup>3</sup>

THIS STAMP OF DISAPPROVAL, and, until recently, the rarity of his albeit small recorded output, have all but condemned Chaloff's

seemingly secure reputation to something approaching obscurity. But however sad his personal life may have been, his music remains as one of the most passionate legacies in jazz. Chaloff, a Bostonian, was from a very musical family. He was born on 24th November 1923 and by the age of 16 had joined the Tommy Reynolds Band, where he was spotted by Barry Ulanov as "a tenor-man with a good tone but unremarkable ideas".<sup>4</sup> Gradually he worked his way up through the big band leagues – Stinky Rogers, Shep Fields, Ina Ray Hutton, Boyd Raeburn and Georgie Auld. By 1946 he joined the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra and his burgeoning baritone style can be heard on an air-check with the band<sup>5</sup> and a Sonny Berman jam session held in enthusiast Jerry Newman's apartment.<sup>6</sup> Later in the year, in September, he recorded a convincing solo as a member of a Sonny Berman pick-up group for Dial Records. The haunting "Nocturne" shows that Chaloff had harmonically, and to a lesser extent rhythmically, aligned himself with the fast developing bop movement.

In 1947 he became part of the celebrated Four Brothers saxophone section in Woody Herman's Second Herd. He was a regularly featured soloist, grabbing the odd eight bars here and 16 bars there in a large proportion of the band's repertoire. His feature was "Man, Don't Be Ridiculous",<sup>7</sup> a "rhythm" variant that demonstrated Chaloff's fluid technique despite the frantic tempo. He was also a resounding section player. "He could play fully, as well as Harry Carney",<sup>8</sup> recalled pianist Nat Pierce. Chaloff's high profile in a band already stocked with superb soloists brought him to the attention of the public at large and from 1949 he displaced Harry Carney for three straight years in the *Danceband* poll, and from 1949 to 1953 he topped the

*Melrose* polls. Sadly, however, his proselytising ways with drugs were beginning to take their toll in the Herman band. At the end of 1949 Herman wound up the Second Herd and reduced to a small group. "You can't imagine how good it feels . . . not to have someone conk out in the middle of a chorus,"<sup>9</sup> he reflected sadly. Chaloff returned to Boston in an attempt to sort himself out.

In 1950 he was with Basie's small group, and recorded 12 titles with them for Columbia. It is immediately apparent that whatever Chaloff's personal problems they had in no way affected his powers of improvisation. He stayed to the year end, but was forced to return again to Boston where he was hospitalised and a planned tour with Duke Ellington fell through. But despite his recordings with Herman and Basie and several ad-hoc small-group sessions both as leader and sideman, the recorded evidence that attest to Chaloff's true greatness as a jazz improviser is limited to his work between 1954, when he began his slow and painful comeback after hospitalisation, and his death in 1957. Al Cohn, Chaloff's closest friend and most frequent recording companion to 1950 observed, "It wasn't until he left the big bands that he really started to develop as a soloist."<sup>10</sup>

Chaloff's return to the recording studios after his long layoff came on 9th June 1954<sup>11</sup> under the leadership of Boots Mussulli, a competent but uninspiring soloist who was more at home in the saxophone section. However, it is immediately apparent that Chaloff has expanded his technique during his long layoff. The fast tempo of "Love Is Just Around The Corner" shows the advances he had made; complete command in all registers of the instrument and an incisive rhythmic and melodic construction that point the way to his

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later successes. 'Easy Street' captures for the first time on record all the facets of Chaloff's individual style, described by Whitney Balliett as 'cupped, whispering phrases, sudden declamations, cramped, *rotto* over runs; stuttering asides and disvalide codes, in which his vibrato moved up and down in slow motion. At fast tempos, Chaloff somehow made the baritone a slip of a thing.'<sup>11</sup>

In September he recorded as 'The Serge Chaloff Orchestra',<sup>12</sup> a nine-piece aggregation from the Herb Pomeroy Jazz Workshop, with whom he was associating as a teacher. The best work from the session came from the one small-band track recorded at the end of the date. 'Let's Jump' shows Chaloff experimenting with tonal distortion, an unfulfilled direction in his playing. But whatever the promise this session may have hinted, it was quite apparent that he was in need of the smaller ensemble to give vent to the true range of his talent, for his work on the other numbers, with the exception of 'Table Of Mabel', lacks cogency.

CHALOFF'S REAPPEARANCE on the scene began to attract local attention, and Bob Martin, a local disc jockey, encouraged him to form a regular band to play at Boston's Jazzerama Club. Some TV dates followed as a result, and the prospects looked bright when Capitol Records offered him a recording contract. After six months of careful preparation and rehearsals, his band entered the studios on April 4th and 5th 1956 to record the famous *Boston Blue-Up*<sup>13</sup> album. Perhaps today some of the arrangements by Boots Mussulli and Herb Pomeroy sound a little stylised, and Chaloff's assertive playing is at odds with the delicate structures of some of the arrangements. His entry on 'Sergeical', for example, sounds almost angry, and on 'Mardos' he takes two choruses that serve only to illustrate his technical competence, the arrangement calling for little more.

The album, however, is valuable for two magnificent features which indicate his best work to date away from the larger ensemble. On 'What's New', he utilises the complete range of the baritone; plumbing the lowest registers with burrington bass notes and soaring to the top of the instrument's range with soft, breathy high ones – effortlessly concealing the remarkable technical skill to appear to be throwing away unconsidered trifles. The triumph of the album, however, is a version of 'Body And Soul' that ranks among the classic interpretations of the song. It's described by Bill Cos in *The Metronome Yearbook 1956* as 'an almost frightening example of Serge's horn, moaning through a seemingly autobiographical portrayal of (his) "Body And Soul", an enormously emotional listening experience".

But Chaloff's ultimate triumph was yet to come. On March 4th 1956 he entered the

Capitol Studios in Los Angeles with an unheated rhythm section to produce *Blue Serge*,<sup>15</sup> the album his reputation as an improviser could well rest entirely on. At last we hear Chaloff stretching out with inspired accompaniment – Sonny Clark (piano), Leroy Vinnegar (bass) and Philly Joe Jones (drums). The result is one of the great albums of jazz. 'His baritone seems to devour the changes in the "Goof and I", wrote Michael James,<sup>16</sup> and his inventiveness is equally manifest over the seven choruses on 'Susie's Blues' where he varies the melodic content to brilliant effect. Especially striking is his gift of paraphrase which had only been intermittently apparent before, most relevant in this regard are 'Stairway To The Stars' and 'A Handful Of Stars'. These also benefit from a remarkable use of tone and volume shifts, twin devices that are most effective – one might say disturbing – in 'Thanks For The Memory' and 'I've Got The World On A String'. The emotional impact comes near to overwhelming the listener, as Chaloff varies the intensities of tone . . . reverting to a relaxed, almost nonchalant delivery, only to explode back into abrasive, often agitated sequences which are nonetheless immaculately executed.'

Three months later, in June 1956, Chaloff contracted spinal paralysis. At first he could walk with the aid of crutches, but by the following September he was in a wheelchair. However, an interesting *divertissement* took place on June 18th 1956<sup>17</sup> when he participated in a *Metronome* All-Stars date for Clef. Chaloff's contribution was in a jam session version of 'Billie's Bounce'. His best solos were on takes one and two (unissued), but it was decided to issue take three which had the best overall feel. Chaloff's solo starts well enough, but halfway through Gerry Mulligan walked into the studio. Chaloff greets him, through his horn, with a sort of 'Hello, how are you?' and then amusingly proceeds to parody Mulligan's style – the Master is handing out a lesson.

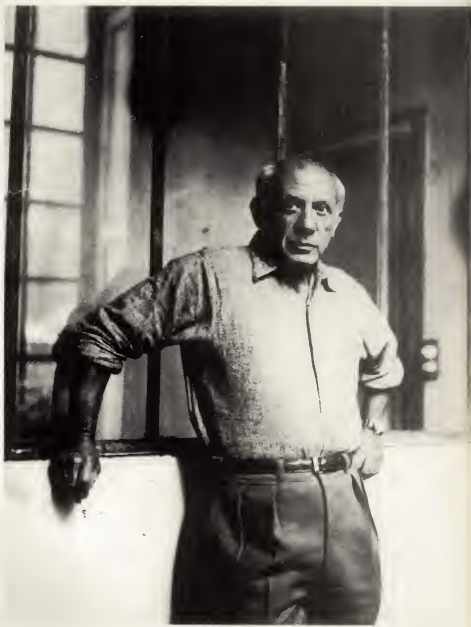
DESPITE HIS INCREASING debilitation, Chaloff was determined to bring about his comeback. He continued to perform at concerts, but early in 1957 underwent a serious operation on his back. Still recovering, and in a wheelchair, he was flown into New York to participate in a 'Four Brothers' reunion date for RCA Victor's subsidiary, Vik Records.<sup>18</sup> Al Cohn, Zoot Sims and Herbie Steward were the tenors, with Elliot Lawrence (who organised the session) on piano, Buddy Jones on bass and Don Lamond on drums. The date began at 3pm on February 11th 1957, and except for a two-hour dinner break continued until 1 am the following morning. The session went well, but as it developed it became necessary to send for Charlie O'Kane, from Elliot Lawrence's band, to spell Chaloff on the ensemble parts. Of the ten numbers recorded, five had O'Kane

providing relief, although Chaloff gives no indication in his solos his health is suffering. Reviewing the album on its release for *Downbeat* Don Gold said: 'This his last session before his death represented the fervent expression of a fatally ill man. It is a kind of significant farewell in the language he knew best.'

Four months later, on July 16th 1957, Chaloff died of cancer in Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. 'During those few years when he resumed his career,' wrote Max Harrison,<sup>19</sup> 'Chaloff was demonstrably making steady progress in forging a mode of expression independent of any one stylistic school or even period. Maybe that precisely was his mistake, so far as it concerned the pigeonhole-minded jazz public, which usually likes its idols to be small and plainly labelled. Despite this, at the time of Chaloff's death at the age of 33, his most fruitful years appeared to lie ahead.'

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*Pablo Picasso: an "archetypal villain"? The 1950s portrait by John Deakin*

IN THE LIGHT OF  
PHILIP LARKIN'S  
ALL WHAT JAZZ,  
WILL THERE EVER BE  
A MUCH-MENTIONED  
BRILLIANCE IN JAZZ  
WRITING, OR WILL  
IGNORANCE ALWAYS  
BE APPLAUDED?

IT WAS, OR SHOULD have  
been, a matter for surprise  
that last year two chaps  
named Faber & Faber reissued  
Philip Larkin's *All What Jazz*.

More than surprising was the  
reception it got. The blurb  
claimed that the Introduction  
to the first edition "has  
become one of the most  
celebrated prose pieces of the  
20th century". Up there with  
*Finnegans Wake* and *The Death  
of Virgil*, with Proust and  
Beckett?

It might be suggested that  
everybody ignores blurbs, yet  
part of that introduction was  
declaimed by a celebrated  
actress, Jill Balcan, at the  
crowded memorial service  
given for Larkin last February  
at Westminster Abbey (no less).

Besides, the reviews con-  
tained more

genuine ecstasy than could be simulated by  
the Fabers' publicity team. In *New Society*  
Clive James, who would never read, still less  
quote and least of all commend a *best sale* jazz  
critic, wrote: "Look what you get from  
reading Baudelaire on Delacroix. Read Larkin  
on Bix Beiderbecke and it's the same thing!"  
That Larkin was a member of the same  
cultural establishment as James is not quite  
the point, for reviewers in the jazz press itself  
did no better. Such unanimity among people  
who ought, for a variety of reasons, to have  
displayed greater insight arouses suspicion.

Readers who do not remember 1961-71  
may be surprised that Larkin was during that  
period considered a suitable person to conduct  
a jazz record diary in *The Daily Telegraph*. But  
the 1960s were, as Dryden said of the  
Restoration, "a very merry, dancing,  
laughing, quaffing and unthinking time"  
during which jazz was fashionable with trend-  
conscious pseudo-intellectuals. Pronounce-  
ments were regularly handed down by  
Kenneth Tynan, Kingsley Amis, Kenneth  
Allsop and Co, who also produced articles  
(cuttings of which are still treasured in some  
quarters) about the "casual expertise" of each  
other's jazz writing. No doubt Larkin seemed  
a natural part of the succession.

Yet it is to his credit that he had a bad  
conscience about this. He does not explain  
why or how genuine experts were bypassed in  
his favour, but he does say (page 18) that he  
ought to have refused the job. Having taken  
it, he spun out a physically substantial body of  
work. The first edition of *All What Jazz*

reprinted his 1961-68 columns, the new one  
adds the remainder. Some of this evidently  
popular material also features in an even  
thicker Faber volume, *Required Writing*,  
which otherwise is a collection of Larkin's  
book reviews.

BORN IN 1922, he became interested in jazz  
during the 1930s. As for most of his  
generation, World War II, by damming the  
flow of records and news from America, was a  
hiatus, and like so many of his contemporaries  
Larkin never really came to terms with any  
later developments. He says that his jazz  
education continued at Oxford, yet boasts that  
"Our response to Fats Waller's 'Dream Man'  
or Rosetta Crawford's 'If You're A Vaper' was  
a grinning, giggling wordlessness, interspersed  
with a grunt or two at specially good bits"  
(p. 17) hardly suggest a strong involvement.  
And he owns to disliking key figures such as  
Jelly Roll Morton and Art Tatum (19). In fact  
by 1961 Larkin had no idea where jazz was,  
and he gives an engaging account of his alarm  
as the review copies began arriving and he  
discovered there was nothing he liked and that  
it was getting worse. "After Coltrane, of  
course, all was chaos, baffled and absurd-  
ity" (21).

The most trenchant answer to such remarks  
came from *The Musical Times* when the book  
took its maiden flight in 1970 (and faced  
noises much less friendly than last year's).  
Wilfrid Mellers wrote, "It seems to me  
improbable, at a sober estimate, that for the  
past 30 years all *pauzemen* have been involved

THE WHOLE

THING HAS

GONE TO

PUT SINCE . . .



in a malignant conspiracy." He added that one eventually doubts the validity of Larkin's opinions even on pre-war jazz, "since if he believes that there is no affinity between Armstrong and Davis, Bechet and Coleman, I suspect his response to the great traditionalists must be partial and incomplete." This is confirmed by Larkin's view that Armstrong "was never original in the sense that Parker was original" (283), a profound misunderstanding of the former that is underlined by his imagining, further down the same page, that there is some link between what Armstrong did and what Mick Jagger does.

If *All What Jazz* were merely an exercise, after the manner of Hugues Panassé and his disciples, in rejecting all significant new departures in this music during a period that now extends over 40 years, then it would not merit a second glance. But Larkin's case is more complicated in several ways, hence more instructive; and hence this article.

He confides that he at first intended to describe all records sent to him as "masterpieces" (19), but the truth kept breaking in (often with Coltrane, despite a "delightful" "Alabama" [142], serving as chief irritant). Larkin coped with this, as he revealed in a passage in the Introduction that was much quoted when the book was new, by "substituting 'challenging' for 'insolent', 'adventurous' for 'excruciating' and 'colourful' for 'viciously absurd'" (28). But he did not do this all the time, and so *All What Jazz* is full of both favourable and unfavourable reviews of post-1945 music. He is honest and dishonest, and simultaneously. If we question his rejection, on some pages, of all post-war jazz and remind him that a critic's "duty is to the present" (195), he can point to his quite frequent praise of modern jazz. And if we suggest this contradicts his repeated claims that "the whole thing has gone to pot since 1945, or even 1940" (175), he can blandly answer that the commendations were not meant. A hard act to follow.

It is the more so as Larkin delivers what may without patronisation be called some surprisingly independent judgements. For example, it is not usual to speak of the

"passionate clarinet" of Jimmy Dorsey (287), to be unenthusiastic about Hines's "indigestible baroque" (132), to praise Red Nichols (277), to be lukewarm over the *Far East Suite* (197), to describe Bunk Johnson as "supple, subtle, sad, elusive" (209) when most of the "real jazz" writers were ponderously facetious about him.

THESE DEPARTURES from a normally rigid orthodoxy served to reinforce Larkin's evident self-image as a romantically isolated lone voice: "Was there no one . . . who had realised what was going on, apart from myself?" (25). But in fact – and this is a crucial point about the book – there were many others saying exactly the same thing as him. Entire magazines such as *Storyville* have always been given over exclusively to pre-modern jazz, ignoring what has happened since. So has most of *Jazz Journal* throughout the greater portion of its long life. And though *Jazz Monthly* is remembered as a modernist periodical, a large part of it was contributed by writers who had no interest in what was significantly new in the music since 1945. Similarly, the dominant voices in the jazz coverage of weeklies such as *Melody Maker* never showed much concern with anything from hop onwards. A comparable situation prevailed abroad, with the *Ballouin Du Hot Club De France* taking a role similar to that of *Nu Pute* (On Guard), the magazine run in the

1920s by Bolshevik literary vigilantes which systematically vilified anyone in its field who showed the slightest independence of thought.

The conformist tendency goes a long way beyond jazz. Larkin says Ayler's *Spirits* LP is "no crazier than some European art music" (152), and he extends his rejection of post-war jazz to a condemnation of all modernism in art, denouncing "Pound, Picasso and Parker" (22–23 *et seq*) as archetypal villains. A man named Henry Pleasants, to whom Larkin refers (27), dragged out this notion, as applied to contemporary straight music, over no less than three books – *The Agony Of Modern Music*, *Death Of A Music*, and *Serious Music And All That Jazz*. Nothing is so laborious as proving fallacies to

be "true"! It is not intended to discuss Pleasants here because there is nothing to add to the admirably ferocious jobs of demolition carried out in the American press by Ralph Berton when these books were new. But the argument espoused by Larkin, Pleasants and many others to the effect that something has uniquely "gone wrong" with the arts in our century is about as full of holes as a good piece of gruyère.

"His work presents a motley surface of ranting, hyperbole and excruciating cacophony," Larkin on Cecil Taylor. Pleasants on Schoenberg? It is J.W. Davison in *The Musical World* of October 1841, on Chopin. Such voices are always loud among us. A good/bad instance is the 19th-century French writer, François-Joseph Fétis, who has an almost unblemished record of being wrong about the new music of his time. Berlioz, Wagner, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin – they were all the "agony", even the "death", of modern music to the then – influential Fétis. Larkin rightly says that music should please (156). But how soon? When Beethoven's great Quartet Op 131 was first performed in Paris – a notoriously civilised place – in the years immediately after its composer's death, most of the audience walked out. Talking of string quartets, when the six sublime works for that medium which Mozart dedicated to Haydn reached print they were greeted with a review beginning, "Now

that barbarians have begun to compose music . . ." Numerous further examples can be found in books such as Nicholas Slonimsky's *Lexicon Of Musical Invective* of great works, from several centuries, being contemptuously dismissed, sometimes for many years after their first appearance. Larkin's assertion that the listener's "ear will tell him instantly whether a piece of music is vital, musical, exciting, or cerebral, mock-academic, dead" (156), is, like his claim that all the "trouble" started with "Pound, Picasso and Parker", quite simply a lie.

Long on malice and short on vision, the put-the-boot-in fraternity are skilful at exploiting the difficulties legitimately posed by music that has anything substantially new to offer. While pretending to be heroically defending a position that is desperately under siege from the rising tide of modernist chaos, they actually say what their dimmer readers want to hear. That is, "Don't bother with this awful new stuff which is so hard to listen to." That has always been the royal road to journalistic popularity and influence, and though it is sad to observe writers pandering to the worst minds of their time when they should be seeking to stimulate the best, we shall be naive if we are surprised by this recurring situation.

AMBIGUITY DOES NOT ATTRACT most people. They distort the contradictions they see in those who have learnt to hold a balance between the opposing forces of their personality. What they seek is not something that will disturb them by enlarging their view of life, but something that will reassure them by simplifying it. Among numerous possible routes, they demand that only one be established as "right", and they dislike the view that each of these paths leads to a degree of truth. Still less do they approve of an attitude which, rather than going to barren extremes, strives towards a measured synthesis. Hence the wide influence in nearly all times and places of those who say "This is wonderful!" and "That is terrible!" and who in particular reject the new and unfamiliar out of hand. What Macaulay described as "the irrational dread of innovation" must never be forgotten



if we desire to think about the arts realistically. This is undisturbed by the Pleasants books, though long out of print, having lately been praised in current magazines such as *Jazzletter* and in recent volumes like Grover Sales's *Jazz: America's Classical Music*.

And anyone who imagines that modern jazz has a secure place in the sun should reflect on the BBC's *Jazz Classics In Digital Stereo* series. Those 26 broadcasts contained not a note of bop or anything more recent and were highly popular. So much so that a further 26 programmes are planned for next year, with a similar exclusively traditionalist content. Nor should the influence of *All That Jazz* itself be underestimated. It is easy to find bookshops among whose small stock of music titles there is a single token volume on jazz – and it is always Larkin's.

Actually, this last is easy to understand. In a sphere where Whitney Balliett's adjective-clogged effusions are widely imagined to be good prose, a distinguished minor poet's genuine skill with words is likely to make an unusual impression. Who can forget Larkin's description of Pee Wee Russell "homing in like a talked-down jet" (226), or his saying that ragtime has "a bizarre classicism, like plantation Scarlatti" (106)? In fact with *All That Jazz* may have found its own *Martin Heidegger*. This latter was a book published in 1934 by Constant Lambert, a fine composer, dazzling talker and great conductor. The passing

THE  
IRRATIONAL  
DREAD OF  
INNOVATION

decades have shown its view of then-contemporary music to have been utterly wrong-headed, yet because it was brilliantly written it for two generations exercised a malignant influence on British musical life. High skill has its dangers, for the writing can "take over", getting between the reader – perhaps even the writer – and the music. Larkin's saying Davis's *ESP* record is "like incidental music of genius for a Swedish film of *Hamlet*" (150) is indeed memorable, but is the music really anything like that? For inexperienced or thoughtless readers a notion such as that Henry Allen's singing "sounds like a man with a bad conscience talking in his sleep" (243) may appear to be true simply because it is so striking.

However, the matter of "fine writing" aside, what is curious about Larkin's case is that, being better educated and far better read than most of those who elect to write about jazz, he understands all this. He is honest, or canny, enough to quote Sigmund Spaeth's 1928 dismissal of classic jazz ("Merely a raucous and inarticulate shouting of hoarse-throated instruments, with each player trying to outdo his fellows in fantastic cacophony"), admitting that this is close to his own comments on free jazz (159). He goes further, and quotes Schopenhauer's characteristically sombre reminder that "Every man mistakes the limits of his own vision for the limits of the world" (259). He complains that in his youth his elders used to ridicule Armstrong's as "jungle music", says they have since been proved wrong (282) – having already himself ridiculed Coltrane's "coba-coasting cacophonies from Calcutta" (119).

Why do such people pretend to be unaware of the easily accessible facts of history, levelling accusations of unprecedented decadence at the arts of their own time despite parallel charges having repeatedly been made in the past and always proved mistaken? Are they incapable of remembering that the past was once the future? What are the pleasures of ignorance?

AMONG THEM IS THAT of creating a world not one's own into which no aspect of reality can penetrate. Reactionary commentaries on the

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arts are like a circle of drunken friends, lost in the dark, leaning on a lamp-post in an enchantment of euphoria, imagining they are holding aloft the light of eternal truth when they are merely holding up each other. A not wholly cynical answer to the previous paragraph's questions might also include the information (recently checked) that the British Flat Earth Society still has thousands of members and that the circulation of its journal, *Flat Earth News*, compares favourably with that of most jazz magazines. Or that when it first appeared *Mandelstam's Travels* was taken as gospel while the truthful Marco Polo was ridiculed.

More seriously, a comment of John Stuart Mill's is apt. "So long as an opinion is strongly rooted in the feelings, it gains rather than loses stability by having a preponderating weight of argument against it." Why is this? True originality, in both art and science, consists in a shift of attention in aspects of reality previously ignored, discovering hidden connections, seeing familiar objects and events in a fresh light. Swift once wrote that such an original can be recognised by the number of dances gathered against him, but, alas, it is the opposition of the intelligent, the knowledgeable, the conscientious, who should be the first to welcome him, that makes the pioneer's task so difficult. Fear of change and an over-compensated certainty of being right drives any doubt from their evaluations. The world of appearance in which they have their importance, and which their minds and imaginations have served as the only permanent and worthwhile dimension of that world, is suddenly shown to be only one aspect of reality.

Most people feel threatened by the new, and a typical defence against unfamiliar experience was Larkin's refusal to read foreign poetry. "Certainly not!" he snapped at Ian Hamilton in a famous interview. No doubt we ought to see his rejection of Parker and Coleman as small beer beside his turning away from Dante and Goethe. In Larkin's case a measure of irony and provocation was admittedly involved. A university librarian for 30 years, he would in the presence of a hard-up younger poet hoping for an Arts Council hand-out be the heavy nine-to-five bureaucrat



if he could do it why couldn't they? Then there was his straight-faced claim that Parker's playing slightly improved towards the end as a result of his 1949 Paris meeting with Bechet, the latter being "always ready to instruct the young" (21). This is good fun, and typical of the post-war "come-off-it" generation to which Larkin belonged. And he worked hard at not looking or behaving like a poet.

The trouble was that such exploits spilled over into philistinism, as per his "let your feet think for you" (255), his favourable reviews of people like Acker Bilk (43) and Jimmy Smith (61), and, according to *The Times* obituary, his avowed hatred of Musart. It is relevant that his 1973 edition of the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* was widely criticised for the inclusion of much weak and sentimental work, and again we notice a turning-away from the challenge that more difficult poetry would have embodied. Characteristically, he said of unfamiliar jazz records, "If they were any good you'd have heard them at school" (226), which is an extraordinarily limited view of jazz or anything else. Either life is a series of significant discoveries or it is not worth having, but poor Larkin began a poem, "Life is first boredom, then fear."

What is the relation between the high acceptability, confirmed by last year's rave notices, of the sort of opinions found in *All That Jazz* and Larkin's almost Berliozian popularity as a poet? His verse is traditional in form, showing great technical skill without innovation. Yet it would be untrue to say it is

## IN TIME

### ALL STREETS

### ARE VISITED

quite free of threats. The "fear" in the above quotation is not only fear of new experience inside or outside art but also fear of the one experience nobody can avoid. Noticing an ambulance careering down somebody else's street, he generally reminds his readers that "In time all streets are visited." Concerning another universal interest, he wrote that he regarded "sexual recreation as a remote thing, like bacarat or clog-dancing." His love poems, if they can be so called, yearn for that "much-mentioned brilliance", yet turn back to solitude in the end, even though one of them concludes "All solitude is selfish." Worse than selfish is a misanthropic reference to Christmas as "That annual conversion of one's indifference to others into active hatred" (270). Pasternak makes Zhivago say, "Men who are not free idealise their bondage" and he might have added that those who fear freedom do the same.

SO THE HISTORY of the commentators will be maintained, and those responsible will continue to be decorated with such absurdities as the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for Music Criticism, to be given memorial services in Westminster Abbey. Grotesque items like *That's The Way I Feel Now*, A & M's insult to Monk, will go on being voted Record of the Year in *Dawn Burt's* International Critics' Poll.

Yet if, as Susanne Langer suggested, "Music is our myth of the inner life," if it is an instrument for making what is oldest in the human spirit contemporary and new, if it is invested with something more powerful than the individual who creates it, then it possesses its own transcendental importance because without it no full statement of the truth can be possible. Few of us sufficiently recognise the importance of courage in the life of the imagination, and that it can make us free from fear and open to the fullness of reality.

Perhaps the useful thing about the unfortunate Larkin's book (and about *Dawn Burt's* poll) is that it reminds us how deeply entrenched are the forces opposed to the above aspirations, and that they are present in us all. Possibly one should end by echoing a character in a version of *Poetry* by one of those foreign poets Larkin would never read: "MAY TRUTH REDEMPT THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES."







*Jamie Talbot:*

*no need to hand it over.*

*We like the record.*

#### JAMIE TALBOT

##### ALTITUDE

(Move MVL 21)

Recorded: No date

*Mama's Gloria; This Masquerade; Rhapsody At Camarillo; I Can't Get Satisfied; In Your Daydream, Altsville, Rex At The Angel, Driftless, Metaphors.* Talbot (sax), Dave Chiff (g), Steve Mellings (p), Andrew Clynder (b), Jim Hall (d) plus Dave Quincy (tr); Pete Jacobson (syn), Chris Fletcher (perc); Claire Hamill (voc).

#### THE SIGER BAND

##### THE HEALING

(Sportlife SPJ 533)

Recorded: London - 12 January 1986.

*The Healing, The Theme, Union A, Union B, Emancipation, The Healing.* Peter McPhail (as, s, trns, fl), George Haslam (ts, bs), Paul Rutherford (tb); Tony Moore (b), Paul Hession (d).

TALBOT'S RECORD reaches into an area of music well developed before the leader was born - not an uncommon feature of 'modern' jazz these days - but presents it within a much more recent and more determined concept of 'production'. Maybe this relates to his background in recording studios and rock group horn sections. The tracks are generally short, all based around the quintet, but with other musicians added as and when required.

They generally keep very much to the point, which is to showcase Talbot's alto. This is not to say the others don't get space but there's never any doubt about whose gig it is.

And it has to be said that Talbot is a very good player. It wouldn't surprise me to find he'd got a couple of Jackie McLean records at home but there's no overload of stylistic debt and at best, on the title track or "Relaxing At Camarillo", for instance, there is an uncomplicated directness that's very refreshing. At times like this, it reminds me, for reasons that aren't entirely logical, of the records which occasionally came out of places like Chicago or Detroit in the late 1950s or early 1960s, when someone only vaguely known outside the locality made statements that were close to, but not quite, what everyone else was saying at the time, leaving those who heard them to think about it. Generally you never heard them again but I suspect Talbot will not go that route: he's more aware of what he's doing for that.

There are a couple of tracks that don't ring quite so true: the opener seems to be aimed in a calculated way at the jazz-disco market - today's equivalent of the gospel/soul clunkers of 25 years ago - while "In Your Daydreams" is mere cocktail-lounge chantoising, but overall there's technical assurance, considerable vigour and possible wide appeal.

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If Talbot's carefully organised set represents a brisk historical away-day The Siger Band takes more of a research-project approach. These differential attitudes are visually available from the albums, the first is a sleek package, with Talbot himself looking very designer-casual, while the Siger musicians convey all the sartorial elegance of polytechnic lecturers, and throw in a slide-note that wouldn't disgrace a Thomas Dolby concert-opening lecture. But what the music discloses is a conscious adherence to the musical forms developed by Albert Ayler, some determination to respect this tradition, and the ability to work at length within this particular connotation of musical 'freedom'.

Not a lot of musicians try this, and maybe it's just as well: Ayler's music has always seemed to me to be a tightrope stretched over a minefield. The surface of the music is relatively easy to reproduce by the use of fierce, simple, hymnic lines, but unless developments are fairly rigorously controlled, and to an extent intellectualised, the danger of collapse into stentorian parody is ever-present. It's something that Ayler himself didn't always avoid (although when he got it right it was bold, thrilling and dangerous stuff). What happens here is that the themes form reference points within what is really one long seamless improvisation, signalling changes of mood, of pace, of voice. The bass figure at the end of Side One sets up the opening statements of Side Two, providing continuity and also confirming what is already clear by then, that this is no headlong rush into a promised land of musical freedom, with everyone getting stuck in the door – as happened in the early days on, for instance, *New York Eye & Ear Control*. This is a considered survey based on existing maps and patient exploration of detail.

So here are two quite different records, addressed probably to two quite different audiences. Both are 'modern' but both deal in ideas and forms that reach back a quarter of a century and more. Now, 25 years ago those who dealt in the ideas of the music of 25 years before that couldn't have made that claim, nor would they have been allowed to. The question is, has jazz reached its limit? Is the freedom from formal rules it found then an area where it can't actually survive for very long? Does it matter? Answers on a postcard, please...

Jack Cooke

#### BILL KIRCHNER

##### WHAT IT IS TO BE FRANK

(Sea Breeze SB2010)

Recorded North Merrick, New York – March 1982

On *The Sunny Side Of The Street*, Brother Braxton: Milk Chocolate Princess; *Theme For Gregory*, *What It Is To Be*

*Frank*, *Embrace*; *Daabod*.

Bill Warfield (tr, fl), Douglas Purviance (bb); Kirchner (p, f, cl, ss, as), Ralph Lalama (f, cl, ss), Glenn Wilson (f, ss), Greg Kogan (p); Andy Mc Kay alternating with Steve Alcorn (b), Charlie Braugham (d).

#### INFANT EYES

(Sea Breeze SB2017)

Recorded: New York City – 31 October/1 November 1983

So *Many Stars*, *Songbird*, *Street Corner Supernatural*; *A Little Corner*, *Music*; *Infant Eyes*; 2–5–1, *Aftermath*. Marc Cohen (p) replaces Kogan.

KIRCHNER'S NONET has been working around New York through the 1980s with a quite stable personnel, and varied reports have filtered through. Consisting almost entirely of unedited single takes, these were the band's first records, and they have grown on me with repeated hearings. In relation to much of what has happened over the past 25 years, this music is stylistically conservative, yet it has a genuine creative thrust, evident in the steady invention of both solos and arrangements. Despite being a nonet, it is less of an arranger's band than might be supposed: not only are there plenty of solos, but these are spread throughout the band and are of decent length. The scores used here are mainly Kirchner's, although there are contributions by Warfield and others. This band's library, which, we are told, is large and constantly growing, is strong on original material, either generated within the group or adapted from elsewhere.

In fact there are only two standard items, both on the first LP, and 'Sunny Side' is packed with more surprises than one could expect of anything so familiar. Warfield's score is typical of the band's recorded output in using the ensemble in a strikingly flexible way, with frequent changes of pace, emphasis, texture. This is to say that the arrangements are very demanding, but the band, which on this showing has few evident weaknesses, plays them with fire and accuracy. It also seems to be regular practice to have interesting things going on during the solos. Among several good instances of this is 'Milk Chocolate', behind Purviance's bass trombone solo. In fact this is a particularly good score, with lots of interesting detail, and one never would guess that it was scaled-down by Kirchner from an arrangement for larger ensemble by Charles Hittmar.

There are notable improvisations on 'Brother Brown' from Lynch – very well developed – and Lalama on tenor. Lynch again does well on 'Theme For Gregory', which has powerfully active piano work by Kogan, with the band active behind him. With 'Daghdod' we come to an understanding performance of an exceptionally engaging score (which quotes Tadd Dameron's 'Hor House') by Warfield, who takes a good, long solo. 'What It Is' is

Kirchner's main solo outing, on soprano saxophone, on this LP, as 'Aftermath' is on SB2017; in both cases he comes up with some well varied ideas.

On the second record the writing is if anything more complex, yet the performances are looser, as in the long closing ensemble of 'Supermarket', presumably as a result of added experience in playing together. The scores contain some enterprising instrumental combinations, and the solos are even better than on SB2010 – Purviance, for instance, on 'So Many Stars', and Lalama, again on tenor, in 'Supermarket'. Perhaps the most beautiful of all these tracks is Kirchner's arrangement of 'Infant Eyes' by Wayne Shorter. '2–5–1' is the farthest out that they go and includes still more fine Lynch, who, among several who are excellent, may be the nonet's best soloist.

Max Harrison

#### JOHN ZORN

##### THE BIG GUNDOWN

(Nonesuch 9 791 39–1)

Recorded: New York, September 1984–September 1985.

*The Big Gundown*, *Poor Son La Ville*, *Poverty* (*Once Upon A Time In America*); *Mulatto* (*Once Upon A Time In America*); *Black* (*Once Upon A Time In America*); *Battle Of Algiers*; *Gia La Testa* (*Donk You Sucker*); *Metaphors* (*La Classe Operaia Vuol Paradiso*); *The Nel 5000*, *Once Upon A Time In The West*.

John Zorn conducts 58 musicians in various combinations.

IF JOHN ZORN goes on this way, he's in some danger of becoming a celebrated figure. He even did a *Blindfold Test* a little while ago. The idea of him doing an album of Ennio Morricone music sounds like another one of those wacky New York crazy gang notions, except he had to be persuaded into doing it.

#### THE BIG GUNDOWN



The result ought to be the record that makes his name, for it's a marvellous collection. Zorn himself has only a minor player's role. He is a composer reflecting on Morricone's raw materials – the themes are recomposed, not 'arranged' – and the heroic melodies, martial rhythms, bel canto flourishes, melodramatic turns and neapolitan follies in the original

music are put through Zorn's own idiosyncratic paces.

There's no space here to do justice to a set of almost infinite diversity. The instrumentation is amazing enough—oboe, turntables, piano and drums on one track, 13 unlikely companions on another—but the precision and clarity of such complex, zigzag charts is even more so. "The Big Gundown" itself is a sonic jam of bits of spaghetti melody, babbling dialogue and the rattle of Latin percussion; at the record's other end, "Once Upon A Time In The West" is cast for wracked, howling guitars, noble in a tough-guy way, which establishes at one remove the patched and lingly grandeur of Leone's film. "Poverty" reduces Morricone's already spare soundtrack rendition into a trembling song for harp, accretion and Toots Thelma's harmonica. Zorn plays his ace by refusing to resort to parody: this is not a kitsch record. Even "Erotico", which has Big John Patton in pursuit of vocalist Laura Biscotto and an unleashed Bill Frisell, is done seriously enough.

Zorn's music, played by many of his friends (apologies for no full personnel listing, but it's very complicated), is tribute and translation. His one original, "The Nel 5000", is a snug fit next to Morricone's own themes. This is miles ahead of even *Answered Nino Rota*. And, apparently, the master likes it too.

Richard Cook

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**JAZZ JUICE 3** (compiled by Gilles Peterson) (Street Sounds 3 (comp. 5))  
*Return Of The Prodigal Son* (Freddie Hubbard), *Work Song* (Oscar Brown Jr.), *The Girl From Ipanema* (Lou Rawls), *Samba* (Rob Mullins), *Listen Love* (Jon Lucien), *Do It The Hard Way* (Chet Baker), *The Coffee Song* (Eddie Gomez), *Call Me* (Nancy Wilson), *The Battle* (Gil Scott Heron and Brian Jackson).

THIS IS A CURATE'S EGG. Freddie Hubbard predictably provides the best (not his best) track—an infectiously perky if unsuited outing with some typically strident, confident soloing from the man. That over, there's not a great deal of listening pleasure left: this is a mainly vocal, largely bossa-nova-based album, the highlights being the smoky Lou Rawls and the lyrics of Gil Scott Heron's overlong "The Bottle". The low points: the singing of Chet Baker, which was generally acknowledged as a mistake at the time and perhaps should have been left to rest in peace (*Crap—Ed*). "The Coffee Song" was infuriating at the time for its cutesy lyrics and taste arrangement, and it's difficult to imagine why a new generation is being exposed to it; "Call Me" is pleasant enough but the same applies to it; Rob Mullins's "Samba" is a bright percussive romp,

but insensibly forgettable—I could go on, but then this is clearly not an album designed to be heard while in an armchair sucking your ballpoint worrying that you're being set up as a catspaw.

Chris Parkes

## STAN GETZ VOYAGE

(Blackhawk BKH 51101-1)  
Recorded: Menlo Park, California—9 March 1986.  
*I Wanted To Say, I Thought About You, Yesterdays, Dreams, Falling In Love, Voyage*  
Getz (ts); Kenny Barron (p); George Mraz (b); Victor Lewis (d); Babatundé (perc on "Dreams")

AGEING SEEMS TO HAVE a particularly interesting effect on tenor players. The changes that middle age wrought on Hawkins, Young, Rollins, Webster and Gordon were illuminating—in some cases, tragically so. Getz is ageing with most of his familiar grace and lightly-held energy intact, but there's an atmosphere around his playing that suggests he's settling into a recitalist's role. In the sleeve-note he mentions that he finds this band agreeable because of its classical touch, as if it were a setting quartet. Though there are new originals here, the crux of the record is the two standards. "Yesterdays" is played tenderly, then in a more curiously delivered manner. "I Thought About You" is cool and sensuous, and abstract and detached too. Ballads were always Getz's personal pause, and what seems to be happening is that once-removed act that Pres and Webster fell into: the player meditating on the player, Getz-on-Getz. He visits the top of his register and seems to be testing his powers in doing so.

Kenny Barron's "Dreams", the longest track, seems to drift among the players. If the techniques are classical, the form tries to be impressionist. But Getz meanders, and so does most of the second side. There's a haze of limpid, gossamer lines where an occasional beauty will come clear, an exquisite tuning will emerge, and then the soft focus will reassert itself. Can a player like Stan Getz develop a highly developed art any further? *Voyage* suggests no further newness, just a stately settling-down.

Richard Cook

## LEO SMITH HUMAN RIGHTS

(gramm/Kabell 24)  
Recorded: North Haven, Conn.—18 March 1985; Myra Seidlin, Reykjavik, and Germann Seidlin, Tokyo—25 September 1984 and 6 October 1985; Tefany Radu—22 September 1982  
*Freedom Song, Don't You Remember, Ethiopian/African, Rastafari #4, Haanawoo Jasta Tawmoo Alazko—*

## HUMAN RIGHTS World Music

Leo Smith (s, fltn, v, perc, mbira, Chinese gong), Stanya (g, synth, perc); Tachao Sawai (koto, perc); Thutman Barker (d); Peter Kowald (b, tba, perc); Gunter Sommer (d, perc); collective personnel

IN NOVEMBER'S *Wife* Declan O'Driscoll quite rightly pointed to an increasing interest in reggae among jazz musicians. It's surprising, then, to find in an album like this, sheathed as it is in Ethiopian stripe and with a portrait of the Lion of Judah, little audible trace of that influence.

Smith's commitment to Rastafarian ideal is plainly signalled in the lyrics, but the music seems to come from some Ur-source, a far less settled vocabulary. That in turn, and at a second hearing, is reflected in the words, which suggest a species of transcendental mysticism not normally associated with Caribbean reggae. The feel is African, very atavistic, very pristine.

"Freedom Song" and "Rastafari #1" are both powerful anthems, the former pairing Smith's voice with Stanya's cranked-up guitar, the latter a group affair with more of the trumpet featured on "Ethiopia/Africa". Thutman Barker drums on the two group songs, a jazz-funk backing to Smith's long, keening notes and sudden snatched silences. It's an effect he uses as a singer as well. There are moments when he's uncannily like Jesse Fuller (there's certainly more blues than reggae in the mix) though the mbira he uses on the splo "Don't You Remember" gives off an echo of Dewey Redman's rather playing.

The mbira reappears on the long second side, a stretched-out, rather abstract piece full of space and unstated posture, far away from the rather programmatic lyric that precedes it. It's billed as "World Music" but of the Don Cherry rather than the Karlheinz Stockhausen sort. Smith is another of Mike Zwerin's planetary ghosts; he's pared the trumpet sound down till it's no more than the most basic cartesian roots of musical language and aretarian springs of improvisational instinct. The whole suite moves with a kind of rape logic but with the individual moves far from view. Kowald's bass and tuba, and Sommer's percussion operate as a kind of occidental foil to Sawai's and the leader's gnosis. The Japanese setting seems entirely appropriate.

Brian Morton

## ART FARMER PORTRAIT OF ART FARMER

(Contemporary COP 029)  
Recorded: New York, 19 April–1 May 1958.  
*Back In The Cage, Stillness, The Very Thought Of You, And Now . . . , Nine, By Myself, Too Late Now . . . , Earth*  
Farmer (t), Hank Jones (p); Addison Farmer (b), Roy Haynes (d)

ANOTHER NAY HINTON production and an all-time favourite of mine, ever since I bought it secondhand two decades ago. It may not be the best qualification for a reviewer to feel he knows a record note for note but, thanks to the years of comparative listening, this album emerges in sharp focus.

Farmer was at the time a brilliant all-purpose soloist for writers as different as Horace Silver, Getty Mulligan and George Russell and, except by musicians, was vastly underrated. What emerged from his 1950s recordings was an interesting scale-based approach, distantly related to very early Miles, but with a highly individual and wistful tone. All this is enhanced here by the cool aggression of Roy Haynes, then resurfacing after years with Sarah Vaughan, and by the stimulating piano work, Jones was perhaps a surprising choice, occasionally becoming rather passive in his accompaniments, but is more adventurous than usual in his solos.

The material helps, such as Russell's "Nita" (not to be confused with Coltrane's) and one of Benny Golson's more challenging items while the standards, two of them featuring Farmer's cup-mate, are well chosen. But the highlights are the themeless blues, one slow but double-tempo and one medium which takes off from the closing phrases of the dynamic "And Now ...". Just listen to the opening bars of the latter, and you'll be hooked.

Brian Priestley

#### SLICK APHONICS

##### CHECK YOUR HEAD AT THE DOOR

(Teldec LC 3706)

Recorded 1986

*Going, Going, Gone, Never Say Never, Dig My Way To China, That's It, Jungle In My Heart, It's You Again, Wishing On The Wall, Gutter, Greasy.*  
Ray Anderson (ten, v, cong), Steve Elson (saxes, synth), Allan Jaffe (g, v), Mark Helius (b, v), Jim Payne (dr).

CATHORISATION has always seemed to me an ambiguous activity, especially when approaching individuals as musically elusive as Ray Anderson. A name perhaps more synonymous with the work of Anthony Braxton and New Expressionism, than with the realms of Urban Funk. Fronting Slickaphonics, a combo which suitably justifies its moniker, with deft elasticity, in an album that amalgamates a curious collage of hip-hop, rap, scat and funk idioms.

The light-hearted temper of the album is carried chiefly by Anderson's unique corrugated vocal quality. An idiosyncratic mish-mash of energetic verbal acrobatics and quirky inflections that complement tongue-in-cheek lyrics ... "Let's all make a decision to live, live until we're dead" (That's it.) Sound philosophy indeed.

Despite an uncluttered format, a chronically over-refined production leaves the album slightly flat. Occasionally an element of rawness surfaces through the sanitised lacquer with Steve Elson's earthy soprano solo on "It's You Again" and Allan Jaffe's electric guitar break in "Dig My Way To China", hinting that in a live environment sparks could possibly fly.

Although lacking the acidic sharpness of a Funkapolitan or persistence of Run DMC, Slickaphonics remain buoyant in purveying jagged funk figures without subsiding into the jargon of ultra-hipdom.

Zian Matthews

#### KUNIYOSHI-KUHN/MATTOS/ PREVOST

##### HANDSCAPES

(Leo LR 143)

Recorded, London - 9 August 1983

*Bro's Eye View, Handscapes, In Winter, Rex To The Future.*  
Akemi Kunyoshi-Kuhn (p); Marcia Mattos (b), Eddie Prevost (dr)

A YEAR OR SO back some of the freshest sounds around were coming from Coherents, the five-piece fronted by Chris Green and Getty Gold but held together by bassist Mattos and the young Japanese pianist Akemi Kunyoshi-Kuhn.

That partnership emerges with even sharper profile on *Handscapes*, four improvisations of great beauty and thoughtful strength. Where Coherents had kept at least a toe in jazz, this draws more obvious water from the pianist's classical background. She has a technique that is almost the polar opposite of that other Leo stalwart Sakis Papadimitriou. For him, the ivory voice has run out of songs and the piano needs a radically new approach. Ms Kunyoshi-Kuhn has set about remaking the keyboard vocabulary. She rarely resorts to extremes - of pitch, tempo or attack - and never to ready-made resolutions. Purity of conception and modesty of approach shouldn't be read as either lack of conviction or confidence. The ideas have the kind of quiet assurance that can be read in the work of another young incomer from Japan, the novelist Kazuo Ishiguro. Besides, she has Mattos and Prevost on the strength, a parting with all the form you'd ever ask.

It's they, ironically, not the piano, who provide the odd tonal benchmarks that keep the pieces from becoming static. Prevost has always got tunes out of his kit without any of the nonsense that usually implies. Mattos puts more drama into a bass chord than even he knows is there.

The best of the album comes with the title track (with Mattos specially prominent) and "In Winter", where open, glassy aspeccios on

the keyboard shiver against creaking bass harmonics and an insistent muffled drum pulse. For a moment, it's like Vivaldi down a long, long corridor. The only weakness overall is the slightly apologetic handling of climaxes which don't really seem called for. "Rise To The Future" never quite reveals itself whole, but maybe that was the point. Otherwise, wonderful.

Brian Morrison

#### BRANFORD MARSALIS ROYAL GARDEN BLUES

(CBS US 40363)

Recorded: 18-20 March 1986.

*Surgeon At The Haven, Dienda, Strike Up The Band, Emotion, Royal Garden Blues, Shadash, The Wrath Of Tain.*

Brantford Marsalis (sa, ts), Ellis Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, Kenny Kirkland, Larry Willis (p), Ron Carter, Charnett Moffett, Ira Coleman (b), Jeff Watts, Marvin Smith, Ralph Peterson, Al Foster (dr). (Collective personnel).

I SUPPOSE THIS could have some subtitle along the lines of "In The Tradition". Marsalis plays this programme as a series of challenges pulled off with the finest assurance. After the debut record, the tour with Sting, the classical collection, this is Brantford consolidating a jazz significance with all bases covered. At 26, the renotman should be approaching his greatest period: this is an exciting prophecy.

The material is meticulously chosen. One original each by Brantford, Wynton and Ellis Marsalis; one each by pianists Willis and Kirkland; a Gershwin standard and the ancient trad tune that gives the record its title. Even on the opening "Swings At The Haven" there's a sense of internal variety. Marsalis plays it first as a fast chord-change blowing vehicle, adds some 'outside' gestures yet holds it within the realm of his father's older style.



The following "Dienda" is a ballad in Kenny Kirkland's most elegant manner, decorated sparsely by soprano sax, then a remarkable "Strike Up The Band" fades in. It is a stunning utilisation of Gershwin's tune, starting like a lightning modal jam in the manner of "No Backstage Pass", then hinting at the theme with rare subtlety before using the original



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melody to slow matters to a close.

The casual mastery of that kind of idea is what some find frightening about the Marsalis clan. They make it seem terribly easy, so polished and achieved is the delivery. Branford's tone on tenor has a slightly seared edge, as if he keeps turning quickly away from some darker heat that he won't quite jump into: fascinating to hear of his brush with WSQ, for he uses a glimmer of free turbulence without getting fully involved. "Royal Garden Blues", which he plays on soprano, is the sort of thing the Chicagoans would send up, or at least inflate with irony; in the Marsalis version, only the opening clip-clop rhythm suggests satire, and that soon dissolves in the face of a bubbling but intense improvisation.

Because his music lacks simple expressive devices, obvious emotional signposts, Marsalis is sure to be called 'clinical' again, like his brother. It's an unsatisfactory charge. He plays at a cool level, a serious level, and in a piece like "Emanon" it's hard to enter his music. But how many would not respond to "Shadows", where his ballad playing insistently recalls the pale, fastidious gravity of Wayne Shorter? In or out of tradition, this is a very fine player at work.

Richard Cook

#### TEDDY WILSON ORCHESTRA featuring BILLIE HOLIDAY TOO HOT FOR WORDS

(Hep 1012)

Recorded: New York, 2 & 31 July, 25 Oct., 3 Dec. 1935

*I Worked On The Moon, What A Little Moonlight Can Do, Miss Brown To You, A Sweeet Blues, What A Night, Parting The Yarn Red, Too Hot For Words, Sweet Lorraine, 24 Hours A Day, Yankee Doodle Never Went To You, Every Muddy Mary No, If You Were Mine, There's That N' Thing, Soggy Place, You Let Me Down, Sprinkle Rhythm Around.* Billie Holiday (v) with Teddy Wilson, Ray Eldridge, Benny Goodman, Ben Webster, Benny Morton, Johnny Hodges and others

#### BILLIE HOLIDAY

STRANGE FRUIT: IMMORTAL SESSIONS 1939/44

(Storyville SLP 4002)

Recorded: New York, 20 April 1939, 25 March, 1 & 8 April 1944

*Strange Fruit, Yesterdays, Fine And Mellow, I Got It Right To Sing The Blues, How Am I To Know, My Old Flame, I'll Get By, I Cover The Waterfront, I'll Be Singing You, Two Years, Enchantable You, As You Go By, She's Funny That Way, Later Come Back To Me, Late My Alone, On The Sunny Side Of The Street.* Holiday (v) with Eddie Heywood Orchestra, Trio and others

#### AT MONTEREY 1958

(Black Hawk BKH 50701)

Recorded: Monterey Jazz Festival, 5 Oct. 1958, *Nobody's Business But Mine, Willow Weep For Me, When Your Lover Has Gone, Good Bless The Child, I Only Have Eyes For You, Good Morning Heartache,*

*Then Their Eyes, Billie's Blues, What A Little Moonlight Can Do, True Love Light, Later Come Back To Me.*

Holiday (v), Mal Waldron (p); Eddie Khan (tr); Dick Berk (td); Gerry Mulligan (ts); Benny Carter (as); Buddy De Franco (cl), (collective personnel)

THE NINE YEARS which separate the 1935 recordings with Teddy Wilson and the sessions conducted under her own name in 1944 represent the most productive period in Billie Holiday's star-crossed career. And like Armstrong's Vocalion sides with Fletcher Henderson on Parker's 1941 recordings with Jay McShann, the performances collected on *Too Hot For Words* provide brilliant documents of a colossal talent's early maturity.

In her hands the frivolous dregs of Tin Pan Alley could take on the sheen of precious jewels; listen to how the lachrymose self pity of "You Let Me Down" is turned into a burning indignation, or how her voice, its deep huskiness pitched into an even earthier grain by the age of the recording, surges like a joyous flame through the banal "What A Night". This is artistry of the highest order. And in fact all these sides come across something like that, not as the consummate group performances some have since heralded them as – the rhythm section and some of the ensemble parts on occasion sound too relaxed – but rather as the means for a handful of stellar performers to parade their dazzling crafts.

The Storyville release was, if memory serves, last issued in this format about five years ago and gathers together the 16 sides Billie recorded in four sessions for Commodore either side of the war. The big difference between these performances and those of 1935 is in the quality of the material and the prominence of the voice. "Strange Fruit", "How Am I To Know", "I Cover The Waterfront" and "He's Funny That Way" are all compositions which give little weight to the old stand-by "it's the singer not the song", and are treated with due respect by three teams of musicians conspicuous only by their unobtusiveness (if you get my drift). The nature of the set makes the ciring of fine detail a pointless exercise. Each performance flows into the next in a slowly unwinding stream of melody, familiar phrases and inflections getting caught in the drifting current like fallen leaves. ("A) private and particular passion" says the sleeve note. One to cherish.

As for the previously unissued 1958 Monterey Festival recording, I found it difficult to listen without getting the feeling of being just another intruder into what had become a tragic and all too public demise. The voice is constantly on the brink of collapse, a cracked hollow shell of a sound, the disintegration of which is made all the more brutal – poignancy just doesn't enter into it – by the presence of Mal Waldron's piano,

buoyant, youthful and painfully oblivious of the crushed spatter at its side. Halfway through Mulligan, Carter and De Franco enter like three pall bearers, respectful, sympathetic and tellingly discreet. This is a bitter and pointless release. For voyeurs only.

Tony Herrington

#### LOOSE TUBES DELIGHTFUL PRECIPICE (Loose Tubes LTLP 003)

Recorded: London – 31 July–1 August 1986, *Sad Afrika, Delightful Precipice, Shelby, Soshun Brakke, Sunny, Herman's Gypsy Breakfast, World I Were, John Eacott, Chris Batchelor, Dave DeFries, Lance Kelly (tr), Ashley Slater, Steve Day, John Hinchmore, Richard Pywell (tr, trb, euph), Ian Ballamy, Mark Lockheart, Steve Buckley, Dai Prechard, Julian Argonnes (trb), Eddie Parker (tr, b), Dave Powell (trb), Django Bates (ky, trb), John Parricelli (tr, mand); Steve Berry (tr, cln), Nia France (tr); Steve Argonnes (perc).*

THIS IS AN enormous advance on the *Loose Tubes* debut. Better themes, better playing, better sound, an adventure is taking the shape of an achievement. It's a hard act to get down on record. Musos concert atmosphere and the punch of 21 players driving into your face, Tubes have to rely on the virtues of all their textures and contrasts. The sound mix is beautifully clear if a bit short on real clout – a lot of the music seems to be going on somewhere in the middle distance. But it suits the democratising way of the band.



There are some fine solos – Richard Pywell on "Sad Afrika", Batchelor and Buckley on "Would I Were" – but it's the cut and thrust of the sections that's so exciting. The great size of the group never seems ponderous, if anything, one would like to hear more of the band all blazing together. Yet the sounds they set up in, say, "Shelley" are as multifarious and absorbing as anything in modern big band writing. Sometimes it's a shade too laboured on the 'abstract' department, as on Eddie Parker's "Soshun Brakke", and some passages let down others: the middle section of "Delightful Precipice" is conventional next to the extraordinary scoring that opens and closes the piece. But that composition, and Django's



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"Sad Afrika", have so many marvellous moments that you can't really carp. There are even echoes of John Carisi's writing, and I can't think of a higher compliment than that.

Is it fun? Why, of course. A lot of it

Richard Cook

#### SHEILA JORDAN THE CROSSING

(Blackhawk BKH 50501)

Recorded New York 1-2 October 1984

*Inchworm, Sheila's Blues, Little Willie Leaps, It Never Entered My Mind, The Crossing, You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To, You Must Believe In Spring, Sassi For Lady and Prez, Until Tomorrow.*

Sheila Jordan (v), Tom Harrell (tlb), Kenny Barron (p), Harvie Swartz (b), Ben Riley (d).

THE GRADUAL acknowledgement by the jazz public, and even recording entrepreneurs, of the very special quality of Ms Jordan's talent has been one of the most pleasurable processes to be witnessed on the music scene over the last few years. For those of us who have been Jordan fans since long before this process started it is hard not to feel self-satisfied, not least because the recognition has started to come despite her consistent refusal to introduce even the merest hint of compromise into her work.

Ms Jordan is surrounded by excellent musicians whose approach is entirely appropriate and sympathetic to her music, and she gives special and well-deserved thanks to Swartz "for being a symphony". Some of the repertoire is carried forward from earlier records, but the items new to disc include a couple of Sheila's own compositions. She has contributed lyrics before now, and of course as with all improvising musicians her solos show her composing on the run, but here "The Crossing" and "Sheila's Blues" were entirely written by her. "Blues" is a lyrically-expanded and slower version of the number heard when she came to Camden with the Steve Kuhn Quartet. It's a resumé of her earliest encounters with jazz in Detroit and includes a litany of her idols from Bird onwards, underpinned by superb down-home playing from Swartz and Riley. Barron chimes in later. "The Crossing" too is autobiographical, a statement of Ms Jordan's belief in the liberating and regenerative power of music, which can take you "to where joy outweighs the pain".

This set is thickly-studded with gems, and it is tempting to catalogue them. Sample the duets with Barron on "Spring" and with Swartz on "Sure" (consisting of "Goodbye Porkpie Hat", "Don't Explain" and "I Got Rhythm"), "Little Willie Leaps" (introduced by a chorus of "All God's Children" — on which "Willie" is based — before skidding into an insane and impossible feat of articulation) and the title track. Harrell contributes fine solos on

"Inchworm", "Mind" and "Home", and Riley is an asset whenever he appears.

She leaves us in no doubt that music is indeed "as serious as your life".

Barry Witherden

#### PHIL WOODS QUINTET HEAVEN

(Blackhawk BKH 50401)

Recorded, Bearsville, New York — 28, 29 December 1984.

*I'm Getting Sentimental Over You, Heaven, The Duke, Azure, 222, Occurrence.*

Phil Woods (as, cl); Tom Harrell (tr, fln); Hal Galper (p); Steve Gilmore (b); Bill Goodwin (d).

PHIL WOODS'S MUCH discussed acoustic visit to Ronnie Scott's was one of the highlights of this year: quintessential small-group jazz, combining all the intensity, dexterity and fire of bop with the precision and attention to texture and timbre of the Cool school. The group's indispensable double album *Integrity*, recorded in Bologna in April 1984, is a perfect representation of their live sound; now comes *Heaven*, a studio LP of great assurance and poise.

"I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" is the perfect opener with Woods tearing into a passionate searing wail of a solo and setting a feverish pitch sustained with confidence and panache by both Harrell and Galper. The heart of the album, though, consists of a trio of Ellington-composed or -inspired pieces which follows. "Heaven", a wistful treatment of the great man's tune, is beautifully arranged and especially memorable for Gilmore's bowed bass and supremely sensitive drumming from Goodwin; "The Duke", a Brubeck tribute, is a catchy, quirky little tune showcasing Galper's chiming sound to perfection; "Azure", a meditative, gently swinging tune, has Woods's clarinet blending rather eerily in the haunting theme-statement with the plangent, reedy Harrell and later with the precise mallets of Bill Goodwin. Another track featured on *Integrity*, "222", relaxes the proceedings somewhat, with Harrell taking an easy-paced solo which perfectly sets the mood for a typical Woods statement — slightly melancholy at the outset then picking up urgency till it climaxes in a cascade of notes. The closing track "Occurrence", a Harrell tune, is a hard-bop vehicle ideal for solo stretching.

Chris Parker

#### TOM HARRELL PLAY OF LIGHT

(Blackhawk BKH 50901-1)

Recorded New Jersey — 11 February 1982.  
*Play Of Light, Everything Happens To Me, The Boulevard, Mood Swing, Blue News, When You Were Harrell (tr), Ricky Ford (tr), Albert Dailey (tp), Bruce Forman (tr), Eddie Gomez (b), Billy Hart (d)*

DEFINITELY THE trumpet of the month! This music's already four years old — why are Blackhawk taking so long over some of their 'new' releases? — and Albert Dailey has passed on in the interim. But the band is playing contemporary and dauntingly confident jazz. Characteristically, Harrell's self-effacing: he seldom takes the first solo, never leaps out and doesn't try to raise the temperature. His statements are calm, well-prepared, shapely contributions to the flow. He's in the tradition of thoughtful, unemphatic masters like Kenny Dorham and Bobby Hackett.

Nowhere do you hear it better than in his ballad feature, "Everything Happens To Me". He doesn't have to undergo the big gear-change that so many players switch through for the slow ones, and there's no corn or waste in his reading. Yet "The Boulevard" has him swinging through some fierce changes, matching Ford and Forman, without musing up his tone or elegance. Harrell's tunes don't blow me away but they're good enough for this exciting sextet to eat up. Ford is big and imposing, Forman has things to say, Gomez is his massive and reassuring self. Harrell seems to be making as many records as Donald Byrd used to: this one's good.

Richard Cook



#### JIMMY SMITH CRAZY BABY

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#### STANLEY TURRENTINE THAT'S WHERE IT'S AT

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K

Green, Lou Donaldson, John Patton, Jimmy

Smith and others whose grooves could be left

to patter along for whole records without

anybody troubling themselves too much. With

that direction long in disrepute, it's ironic but

maybe inevitable that so much new jazz

interest centres itself there – instead of the

harder Blue Notes of Sam Rivers, Wayne

Shorter, Andrew Hill and Anthony Williams.

This fresh batch of ten reissues concentrates

almost exclusively on Blue Note's boogaloo

blues. I surmise that some of them have been

selected on the sole basis of one or two tracks

being club hits, because as whole albums some

of these are inconsequential. Lou Donaldson's

*The Natural Soul*, for instance, has "Funky

Mama" and not much else, an easily swallowed

stopper with simple solos for Lou, Tommy

Turrentine, John Patton and Grant Green.

Elsewhere the disc hits a low level on

something called "Spaceman Twist" and it's

only Turrentine's unexpectedly forthright solo

on the ballad "That's All" that offers anything

above the completely predictable.

You could say much the same about Jimmy

Smith's Blue Notes, though in his case the

reliability makes more sense: Smith's work

comes on as relentless, the great swell of

burning pedal notes, the staccato right-hand

arpeggios, the slow and inexorable climaxes. It

doesn't matter somehow if he's playing

Rollins' "Sonnymoon For Two" or "When

Johnny Comes Marching Home", both of

which are on *Crazy Baby*. The difficulty comes

in the lax responses of Quentin Warren and

Donald Bailey, who do no more than stand

forefront but this one, which I'd never heard before, is surprising. As a pianist he's no more than a competent Silver disciple but his straining has a more thoughtful, exploratory touch, sometimes exotic in the style of Yusuf Lateef. "Wahoo", "Bedouin" and "Fly Little Bird Fly" are intelligently moulded for the horns, harmonically interesting if not startling. And even where there's less to chew on, as in "Amanda" or the 4/4 of "ESP", Pearson's group play absorbing lines. James Spaulding is on alto and flute, and that neglected stylist is at his saltiest; Joe Henderson goes straight at all his solos, and works quite subtly through the inwardly-reflecting turns of "ESP". This is a very good set.

Donald Byrd is on trumpet, and he has a showcase of his own on *I'm Tryin' To Get Hoar*. But leave this one alone. It's a mystery why it's been reissued so often, a dreadful jumble of gospel themes, voices and strings. A fashionable disaster.

*Serenade To A Soul Sister* is the sort of funky recital that Horace Silver used to be able to whip up to order, though there's no far in these stylings: all the tunes are concise, smartly finished. The title track is a rocking vamp which tests everybody's ability to say something relevant on very raw material. Charles Tolliver just misses out, Stanley Turrentine barrels through it, but it's the sublime minimalism of Silver himself that sounds exactly right. You can date the set to 1968 from titles like "Psychedelic Sally", and we must be grateful that the lyrics on the sleeve are not on the record. Young Billy

Jobham drums up on side two, and there's an agreeable sequel to "Lonely Woman" in a trio piece called "Next Time I Fall In Love".

The other three albums are all, to varying degrees, setpieces for tenorists. The reissue of *Iran Green's Grandstand* is particularly welcome, for this rare record has Yusuf Lateef in a guesting role. Green and Jack McDuff do their usual things on guitar and organ respectively, but Lateef's classical strength and might are in a different league. The sprawling *Blues In Maude's Flat* has Lateef's tenor flirting with his outermost edge without succumbing to rhetoric; this is a blues definition of the most eloquent restraint and knowledge. The rhythm of "Grandstand" is very fast, yet Yusuf never hurries through a solo of sharp, nagging phrases. A still, murmuring "My Funny Valentine" sets the seal on a very good record.

*That's Where It's At* features Stanley Turrentine in his swift, garrulous mode. Turrentine is one of those players you go to sleep on before being woken by some abrupt, umbling phrase. Stanley will work his way into a noodling solo, get a little bored himself and then shake off the lethargy with an unexpected twist. It's a style somewhere between complacency and frustration. The soulful mood was probably his ideal home, preparing the way for the easy listening he moved through in the 70s and 80s, and titles like "We'll See Yawl After While, Ya Heah" tell their own story. Yet he can be strong, sometimes very strong indeed. The blues ruminations of "Pia" are deftly proportioned, as though Turrentine's thought the whole thing through without surrendering spontaneity.



After all those bopping shuffle-soul rhythms, a relief to get down to the core of heavy, romantic like Quebec. Green is on hand again, and so are Paul Chambers and Philly Joe, but aside from the faster "Like" they only have to tick off the time while Quebec goes through his stately paces. Ike was a player of a different generation to most Blue Notes: his heart was in the lush swing lineage of Hawkins and Chu Berry, and his phrases

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have the steady and patient mobility of music that predates bop. "Like" is like Ben Webster at fast tempos, troublesome as a disturbed bear, and the slow melodies of "Count Every Star" and the title tune are spoken in the finest romantic tones.

Richard Cook

#### HENRY KAISER MARRYING FOR MONEY

(Minor Music 1010)  
Recorded: Mobius Music, San Francisco. No date.  
*Murder One, The Set Up, T-Mex, The Big Clock, Too Late For Tears, Red Harvest, Pigs And Battleships, Java Jack, The Heavy Trap, The Heavy Eyeball.*  
Henry Kaiser (g), Hilary Hanes (b), John Hanes (d) Plus John Abercrombie (g), Amos Garrett (g), Glen Phillips (g), Fred Marshall (g).

TAKE THREE MUSICIANS who claim to derive more inspiration from the "expressive models" of John Lee Hooker and Howlin' Wolf than from contemporary rock or jazz and set them loose on material built around a multiplicity of barely related pulses and you have new meaning for the phrase "blues like showers of rain." Kaiser's trio sets up a glorious clatter, all cloudbursts of rimshots and down beats. The music proceeds from tediously stremmed conceptual problems of Henry's (how to mix polytempo with rock improv, polyphonic techniques, world music sources etc) but it feels all right. H.K. tells us that "Ancient Chinese Chan music" is a vital component of "The Ser Up". I have no means of confirming or denying this statement, and don't much care either way. To me, the piece sounds like a little annex to the church of Hendrix and Sharrok and is welcome.

Drummet and bassist Hanes brothers I've noted for a decade. Even when they were powering punk band Pearl Harbor And The Explosions or Jorma Kaukonen's blues-rock Vital Parts band, it was obvious that these were musicians whose inclination led them to play between the genres, whether or not they had the sanction of a West Coast thinker. Harvard graduate and UCLA lecturer Kaiser can't help his academic bent, I guess, but it's important to point out that his music never sounds as laboured as his descriptions of it. Each of the guest guitarists, who grace one track apiece, is shocked out of his trademark characteristics by the radical music of the Kaiser trio and forced to play something new. Amos Garrett, for example, who invented everything in the Dure Straits sound that Mark Knopfler did not rip off from J.J. Cale and Albert King, sounds more like Zoot Horn Rollo here as his guitar rattles around the scorched craters of the rhythm. John Abercrombie, who appears on "Too Late For Tears", leans on the gas pedal and takes more chances than he has since, oh, the first Gateway album, probably, with scarcely a hint

of the traditionalist he has become.

But if the special guests enhance the record's sales potential they aren't crucial to the musical result. The responsibility rests with Hanes, Hanes and Kaiser. It's a feisty, spiky music they've made, abrasive, crowded with jagged edges, and on the occasions when the rhythms are allowed to coalesce it achieves a terrific propulsion. Equally, though, the two- and three-way tug of the music has its own gripping dynamics.

Steve Lake

#### BARBARA THOMPSON HEAVENLY BODIES

(TM Records TM10)  
Recorded: Temple Music Studios - August 1986  
*Appar Suite, Le Grand Voyage/Extrême Jonction/Requiem Pour Des Priants/Entre le Trois de la Miroir/Les Barricades Myriamnes, Heavenly Bodies; Love Or The Edge Of Life, Flyman Fields, Flight Of Fancy, 7th Avenue Sunrise, Horizon New*  
Barbara Thompson (s, es, ss, cl, fl, alto fl, pcc, kybd, Guy Barker, Stuart Brooks, John Thirkell (tr), Bill Goldland (the ctn), Patrick Helling, Robin Williams, Rod Donahy (vlns), Tony Hains (vcl), Quentin Williams (clo), David Cullen, Peter Lemer, Steve Mulling (kybd), Dave Bell, Andy Pank (tr), Paul Dunn (g) John Hosenan (trmpn), gongs, cymbals, d, synth perc), collective personnel

THIS IS SOMETHING of a departure, even from a musician who's long preferred to think of herself as a composer/player rather than player/composer. Side one is a suite inspired by the five rather weakly surrealist Dominique Appia paintings reproduced in a liner. The exact part of stimulus isn't obvious to me, beyond the fact that it has sparked off some of the most interesting and stimulating music this underrated player (or composer/player) has yet produced.

After a rather conventional opening track, "Extrême Jonction" introduces some beautiful clarinet playing and a lovely raggy solo from Peter Lemer. "Requiem" leans heavily on the strings with a death-march effect that sounds to come from somewhere not unadjacent to Kurt Weill. Track four introduces the brass for the first time and reveals what was already implicit, that Thompson is a very respectable arranger. Her own flute work lacks a bit of definition and she might usefully have double-tracked herself to fill out what turns into a rocking, Latin piece. "Les Barricades" drops the pace again and brings the suite to a slightly anti-climatic end with soprano sax and water-drip synthesiser figures.

The second side is disappointing, even a shade worrying. The titles lose their French camouflage and a harder man might say twee: "Tibetan Sunrise" (The music reflects the same (whisper it) New Ageish obsession with mood and texture over draggy old-time things like tension and a melody. Ironically, there's less change of tempo here than in the suite.

There's enough going in the "Appia Suite" for me and it would be interesting to hear it tackled live with a string trio and a couple of horns. Barbara Thompson's too good and too valuable a jazz player to get too fixated on 'composition'. That's a laziness - like 'fusion' once, which covered multitudes of sins - none of us can afford.

Brian Morton

#### NATIONAL YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA WITH AN OPEN MIND

(NYJ 007)  
Recorded: London - June 1985 & February 1986  
*Cheese 'N' Carrots, Remembrance, With An Open Mind, Remembrance, Airtwork, Symp Of Phage, Fly To Me, Moshing Out, Gong Donk.*  
Some 40 musicians contribute in various combinations, please excuse me not listing them all.

THE TITLE LOOKS like NYJO with their backs to the wall, but after 21 years the only thing they ought to be paranoid about is their titles ("Cheese 'N' Carrots"?). They go on about the bigness of Loose Tubes but there are some 25 players on each of these tracks. And they make an assured sound. It's a problem that they're produced as an MOR orchestra - this muted, reverberated setting makes them sound like they're ready for Radio 2.

Soloists are full of facility without anything profound to say, perhaps. Nigel Hitchcock's



bombing alto run through "Cheese" is well done but glib. Steve Waterman's trumpet feature on the title track is pretty without leaving any special mark. That's really the Orchestra's unfortunate way: it's all in good taste. The only show of misdeceit is in "Amoebae", a terrible bit of bad reggae (though we could have done without Bill Ashton's sleeve comments on that music). The scores are neatly tailored but little more than the capable technical exercises that good young musicians always work through: there's none of the outé attack of Loose Tubes (many of whom can't be much older than the NYJO team, after all). Only "Remembrance" is an exceptional score, with fine flute by Andy Panayi.

Richard Cook

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### THE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. (a) Sam Ra, (b) Yusuf Lateef; (c) Shafi Hadi. 2. (a) Steve Lacy, (b) Evan Parker, (c) Archie Shepp; (d) Roland Kirk; (e) George Russell; (f) Lester Bowie. 3. (a) Walter Page, (b) Louis Armstrong; (c) Bobbie Jaxxon; (d) Joe Venuti. 4. (a) Holland, (b) Italy, (c) Norway. 5. (a) Roy Eldridge (talking about Miles Davis's) (b) Archie Shepp, (c) Duke Ellington. 6. (a) Victor Feldman, (b) David Murray, (c) Stan Getz, (d) Lee Konitz; (e) Sherry Rogers. 7. Don Payne, Charlie Haden, Rod Mitchell, Scott LaFaro, Jimmy Garrison, David Ilesman, Rudy MacDonald, Jamalladeen Tacuma, Albert MacDowell. 8. (a) 'I'm Getting Sentimental Over You'; (b) 'Nightmare', (c) 'I Can't Get Satisfied', (d) 'Take The A Train', (e) 'Skyliner'. 9. (a) Eric, (b) Richard, (c) John. 10. (a) New York, (b) New York; (c) Copenhagen (d) Stockholm, (e) San Francisco. 11. (a) Thad Jones - the others were all regular Duke Ellington trumpeters, (b) Dexter Gordon - the others all play or played bass sax; (c) Turrentine - the others all played tenor in The Jazz Messengers. 12. (a) Johnny Hodges, (b) Ben Webster, (c) Kenny Clarke, (d) Richard Holmes.

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10-19 Junior cat  
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FROM PAGE 25

beat, and his colourful stories were like those beautiful, legato solos from the 50s Verve dates—until he needed to break it up a bit, as he would with one of his jokes; the way he had to do those squeals on the JATP concerts. I wondered if he missed the night life, the playing until dawn and the breakfast shows. "Hell no. I did all that. Besides, where do cats hang out? I gotta wait 'til they're at a club—and I don't usually like who's on the bill, anyway. People just don't understand. I've been out all night. I can't wait to go home when this thing's over."

ALTHOUGH THE TWO living legends above were able to witness their treatment by an admiring constituency, a late great legend was unable to defend herself recently. *Lady Day At Emerson's Bar And Grill*, a 'mono-drama' on the life of Billie Holiday, proved for the hundredth time this Lady's never gonna sing 'em no more—that Ms Holiday remains the most elusive subject for assessment in any medium.

None of the failings of this drama, more melo- than mono-, can be laid at the feet of its star, Loretta McKee. Facing a nigh impossible task, portraying the mercurial, embittered Billie of 1959 spinning out her days in a seedy Philadelphia bar, she does flesh out a woman more hurt than hurtful—and that in itself is a success. That you'd never mistake this characterisation for Billie is no crime: there seemed to have been as many sides to Billie as ways she interpreted her songs. If the BBC documentary couldn't touch her, with the dozens of people they marshalled, it's clear the Lady's not to be done.

The triumph is Ms McKee's singing. When it is good, it's enough like Billie to make you

DEXTER

FROM PAGE 15

problems in 1967, when the Danish government considered expelling him, led to student demonstrations with "We Want Dexter" banners.

While "exotic" and busy in Europe, absence from the US reduced his influence. By 1976, however, Coltrane was dead and Sonny Rollins was playing disco. New York was ready for Dexter Gordon again. He had returned all along for short tours, but this was different. He describes it: "It was pouring with rain opening night at the Storyville, but the place was packed anyway. I got a standing ovation before I played a note."

He signed a lucrative contract with CBS, moved to New York and the comeback of the classic bebopper was midwife to the birth of

recall the songs, though it never attempts disastrous mimicry. Standing at the microphone, looking ravishing in a form-fitted white satin gown, she sings about a dozen members, interspersed with a lot of babble about her life. As the shifting colours of light at this nightclub become increasingly harsh, the cruel picking at her wounds mitigated only by a wobbly overhead fan, she manages to carve out a handful of beautiful renditions of Billie Holiday classics. The impending sense of breakdown, as her anecdotes become personal and self-denying, adds to the mystique: how will she collect herself to sing, much less sing well? "Don't Explain" and "Strange Fruit", two of the hardest, are two of the actress's best.

McKee fashions a sultry style of her own that never wanted for comparison with her subject. She is surprisingly most effective in the lower register—she is quite petite—and her finest moment is the lesser-known song, "I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone", which she returns to at play's end. She does have problems moving in and out of an octave, and "God Bless The Child" is just an accumulation of effects. She is fairly capably supported by a unusual trio, where the guitarist doubles on harmonica (Rudy Stevenson), the bass player (David Jackson) is over-miked (is that to create the sense of the club's seediness?) and the pianist and musical director, for the play and for the 'show', plays one of Billie's last supporters (Danny Holgate)—although he is hardly "in" the play enough to know in what way he supports her.



the style called "neo-bop".

"It's not at all the same bop." Those

Given the technical challenges imposed on McKee, even a weak attempt like "Crazy He Calls Me" can be understood. She is asked, by playwright Lanier Robertson, to stop and start the song repeatedly, so she can give us the asides, reveries and outbursts that try to make this a play, not a cabaret turn. "When A Woman Loves A Man" particularly suffers from this, and the gushes, titters and snarls quickly become a crashing bore.

We are given the facts, and Robertson laces the evening with some funny anecdotes on Billie's chequered life. But as the reminiscences become depressing, it's clear he's going to have Billie self-destruct, so we wait for the mechanical dropping of this or that pathetic tale. We wait for the tragic story about her grandmother's death and wonder, when will he bring up the heroin matter? By the time he does we are aware why Billie has to leave the stage a few times and looks a little different on her return. Can all this pathos, of a Lady on junk, rambling, be worth watching?

What is so elusive for the writer here, as in all the other treatments of Billie's life, is the right mix of naivety and jadedness. Portraits of junkies often seem so self-indulgent, because it is so difficult to capture the shifts in mood, the mercurial temper. In addition, Billie was a performer quite aware of the impact she had on her public. She seemed to move in and out of various personae: she could parody the role people wanted from her, or easily become the self-destructive junkie a cynical audience expected to see. Add *Lady Day At Emerson's Bar And Grill* to the long list of those that couldn't resolve this dilemma thematically.

I do hope, however, that we hear more from Loretta McKee. "I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone" should become her theme song.

GORDON

hypnotic hands again. Tavernier says he chose Gordon over Archie Shepp "because of his hands". Gordon continued: "There's a whole new set of moral, musical and social values. That's one of the great things about jazz. It's always alive, evolving, growing. I hope we got some of that feeling in this movie. It's important to me. It's my life."

He received another standing ovation the first weekend of September, after the film was screened at the Venice Film Festival. The cool bebopper broke into a warm smile, patted his heart and admitted: "I cried."

Like Lester Young, who named Billie Holiday "Lady Day", Dale Turner calls everybody "Lady". At the end of the last day of shooting, Gordon asked Tavernier: "Lady Bertrand, how long will it take me to get over this movie?"

# JAZZWORD

BY TIM COLWELL

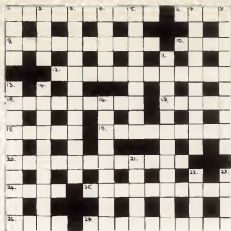
ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

## A C R O S S

- 1 Grim baller for Commodore 'Commodore' (4,6)
- 6 Asperse-less O.E. trumpeter. (4)
- 9 Sequential practice or fishy investigation? (5,5)
- 10 Rais to fame! (4)
- 12 Trip-holy goon: Come up with bop study. (1,2)
- 15 Art faults caused by speedy technique. (5,4)
- 17 Margarine used firstly by almost pure singer. (5)
- 18 Bloody Fool! Would joining R.A.F. make you a great trumpeter? (5)
- 19 Transparent apprehension. (First-eight nerves, perhaps?) (5,4)
- 20 Descriptive of dirty bop-singing? (1,2)
- 24 Sold the trumpet? (4)
- 25 Making a Saunt of Julian Ardelley? (10)
- 26 Twisted Scandinavian person? Well, nearly! (4)
- 27 Ervin, Omette, Cobb, Land, Giuffre, Garland, Ellis, Ramey, Johnson: lone stars grouped? (5,5)

## D O W N

- 1 Tim's obscured part of Bix tune. (4)
- 2 Genocley's back-mail? (4)
- 3 "Me's no fag, Best!" Is that the sort of thing we want in US Wartime travelling-band? (6,1,1,1,3)
- 4 Macho Miles? (5)
- 5 He's tensing, Don!" Show him where the music finishes (4,2,3,4)
- 7 Clockwork beater! (10)
- 8 Turn aside British swing 'clarry', we hear, at last. (5,5)



- 11 Needs verifying as bird-song. (1,2)
- 13 Certainly, initially, Bob's mudda is in a mess! All because of Enskue Hawkins' trumpeter (5,7)
- 14 "Near gander!" Incorrect thing to say to sister of Cub, Charles and Weldon. (1,9)
- 16 Jimmy Rowles was born an oak pest! Bob Crosby, too (2,7)
- 22 See 5.
- 23 Jon Hendricks' lyrical short aside to take no notice. (2,2)

## LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 The Days Of Wine (And Roses), 8 (Hall) Overton; 10 Greer; 11 & 7 Ory's Creole Trombone; 12 (Al) Grey, 13 Oloro; 17 Turrs, 19 Temate, 20 Elastic; 23 Nadir, 24 Land; 25 (Joe) Puma; 26 Strum; 30 (Charlie) Elgar; 32 S (Shady) Bonano, 33 Little Boy Blue.  
DOWN 1 Two For The Blues, 2 & 6 Every Eve, 3, 12 & 16 Arts Council Grant; 4 (Jimmy) Forrest; 5 Inge; 9 & 18 Night Train; 14 Lord (Bard), 15 Dicky; 22 (John) Gnaa; 27 (On The Trail; 28 Fec; 29 (Little) Pony; 31 (My Gal) Sal

## F R A N K Z A P P A

FROM PAGE 55

are to interpret a certain sound. We could call this the subjective response, which varies culture to culture.

That's right.

And there is also an objective response, a universal response to music, which is a result of how sound acts physiologically upon the human body.

Yes, the physiological aspect of it does exist. There are certain frequencies that affect your body and make you do things. There's a frequency that will stop your heart, at the proper amplitude. The French experimented with this. I think it's three cycles at 120 dB (as per an article in an ancient issue of *Popular Mechanics*). When you get into the audible range – not subsonics – those frequencies too are conveying information that transcends the musical information.

## ZAPPA ON ZAPPA

What projects are you currently working on and what are your future plans?

Well, we're in the mix stage of Dweezil's new album. (Dweezil is Zappa's 16-year-old son.) And it's red hot! It's a real good rock 'n' roll record and that will be ready very soon. I'm also working on new compositions for the syncalvier – spending most of my time editing. Have you considered doing any ensembles with your syncalvier?

I had my agent make some enquiries to see if there was any interest. Most of the people were

afraid of it. They're afraid that they won't be able to sell any rickets. In order to play the syncalvier all you have to do is push the "start" button and the syncalvier plays itself. The question is, "Will somebody buy a ricket to hear that?" And the answer is probably "No!" You know, I'm so involved with the syncalvier and what it can do and being able to hear compositions played exactly, that I'm not even interested in writing any other kind of music. I don't get a charge out of even thinking about it.

You have a very prolific output. Do you have any special methodologies for getting things done?

Just keep working, a little sleep, a lot of work. That's probably one of the best-kept secrets in America. I think there are a lot of people afraid to work that way because they are afraid somebody will say they are workaholics. It's not as bad as having somebody call you a "communist", but if you are in a jogging suit nobody wants to have that label attached.

What do you see as your greatest accomplishment and your greatest failure?

I would say that my entire life has been one massive failure. Because I don't have the tools or wherewithal to accomplish what I want to accomplish. If you have an idea and you want that idea to be done a certain way and you can't do it, what do you have? You have failure. I live with failure everyday because I can't do the things that I really want to do. I can do some other stuff. I can do whatever my budget will allow me to do.

I enjoy sitting down here [in the studio] all by myself typing on the Syncalvier. I can do

twelve hours and love it. And I know that ultimately it doesn't mean a thing that I did it. It's useless. That's okay, it makes me feel good.

It seems that for most people that kind of isolation would lead to loneliness.

Try to imagine what the opposite of that loneliness is. Think of it. Everyone in the world loves you? What is that? Realize that you're in isolation. Live it! Enjoy it! Just be glad that there aren't a bunch of people who want to use up your time. Because along with all the love and admiration that's going to come from the people that would keep you from being lonely, there is the emotional freight you have to bear from people who are wasting your time, and you can't get that back. So when you're lonely and you're all by yourself, guess what you have? You have all of your own time. That's a pretty good deal. Something you couldn't buy any place else. And every time you're out being sociable and having other people be "nice" to you so that you don't feel "lonely", they're wasting your time. What are you getting for it?

Loneliness, once you've come to deal with it so that it is not an uncomfortable sensation, so it doesn't feel like drowning or something, is not a bad deal. It's a good deal. It's the next best thing to solitude. I'm not talking solitary confinement. Solitude.

If you're sensitive to loneliness, you're going to be in trouble, because then the loneliness turns into something really painful, a horrible depression and then you die. One way or another, you just die. So who needs that shit?



## THE WRITE PLACE

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LONDON W1P 5PN.

### Going Wrong

IT HAS, OVER THE last couple of months been revealed to me where I had been going wrong in my last 25 years of listening to jazz. What I had been doing was actually, listening to the music and assessing whether it was relevant to me as "good" jazz. Of course, what I should have been doing was looking at the musical clothes – are their suits "sharp", do they wear silk scarves jauntily draped over their shoulders?

The guys I've been listening to over the years come out a little differently with my new awareness, although a few problems remain. The M.J.Q. must be OK, they always wore suits and had bow ties; Bird and Diz are obviously not very good, the berets were fine, but with hand-painted ties!! Roland Kirk must have been excellent musically, he wore "shades" even in nightclubs. That's got to be pretty cool. Tubby Hayes was rated in Tim Colwell's letter as "grossly overrated", this must mean that although he invariably wore a suit he was "gross" or "tubby" so out he goes. The drummer, the late, great Johnny Butts must have been really good – his suits were so fashionable that it was amazing he could sit down, let alone play the drums. Loose Tubes presents a dichotomy – is wearing plastic bags, painting oneself with wood, and having an extra eye in the middle of one's forehead indicative of good jazz? Perhaps it means that it's "good" jazz in the hip clubs of London, but it's rubbish in a town hall in the Midlands – or, conversely, that thanks to Maggie it's more cool in the Midlands because wearing plastic bags is all the people there can afford. Maybe one of your excellent writers could develop this theme and educate me into how sartorial style is indicative of excellence in the playing of jazz.

Keith Raison

### No CD, No Comment

I AM WRITING to question the opening of Richard Cook's article on compact discs (issue 32) COMPACT DISCS WILL NEVER BE THE PRINCIPAL MEDIUM IN JAZZ OR POP MUSIC!

I work as a jazz record buyer, so I think I am qualified to support this statement:

I Major record companies (except Polygram – who are only saved by IMS) know jazz music to be a non-profit-making area. For example, 80% of my CBS LP stock has been deleted by CBS England. Fortunately they are available on import from CBS France (who

never delete jazz LPs) at normal price. So it is hardly likely that CBS England would spend the amount involved to transfer to CD records deleted from their own Black Disc catalogue.

2. At the moment it is proving to be physically impossible for record companies to keep up the supply of new release pop material alone. With three-year waiting lists at pressing plants and mechanical failure (oops GRP!) it will be years before they can cope with new releases, let alone backtracking.

Classical music is a completely different matter. CD is the perfect medium for classical music. The dynamic range of the music is complemented by the technology and the punter has brass in pocket, so naturally no expense is spared to satisfy demand. However, WARNING! Beware of blatant rip-offs! A recent recording of the complete Mozart piano concertos was released as a 13 LP box set. It could have been squeezed on to seven CDs, but instead it was released on 12 CDs retailing at over £100! You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to see where their heads are at...

New jazz music has always been made on a shoestring. God bless John Jack at Cadillac and the many others like him who are keeping jazz music available.

Droid, North London

### The Gap

IF YOU A Lounge Lizard, no less, to come up with one of the most interesting ideas I've ever read since an article by Roger Riggins in *Coda* earlier this year. Marc Ribot (*Wm* 32) suggests that the generation gap separating younger musicians from the source means that they are unlikely to be able to play bebop-inclined music with anything approaching the profundity of the people who actually constructed the form. When he says that people like organist Jack McDuff and other instrumentalists of his generation listened to Basie and Ellington before they went out to play the new music of the day, it strikes a very real chord.

For some time now I have been wondering, if there really is such a jazz boom on, why so many young would-be beboppers here and elsewhere sound so run of the mill. Why, when I see all the zoot suits and run into people who say things like "solid, baby" am I reminded of the New Orleans revival with which I grew up? Naturally, I wonder whether it's me getting blasé but then I'll hear someone like Stan Tracey playing with Charlie Rouse and the old magic is still there. (By the way, where were all these new jazz fanciers at these gigs?)

It may be expecting a little too much for younger people to tune into music made before the 1950s because of the rhythm, but I would have thought that to at least listen to the latterday Basie band with people like Lockjaw and Thad Jones on board would provide food for thought for those who want to get more than their chops in order. But Basie isn't one of the 'in' figures, is he?

Which leads on to the Roger Riggins piece. In it he discussed Wynton Marsalis and the conservative syndrome afflicting the music stateside. If jazz becomes something studied and learned as an artefact, doesn't it then become an institution? he asks. And aren't institutions the antithesis of the music?

Val Wilmer, London N16

### Tubby

WHILE AGREEING wholeheartedly with the gist of Tim Colwell's letter about the lack of recognition of the late Charles Butchell, he then has to go and spoil it all with a silly and unjustified attack on the great Tubby Hayes. On his ability as a tenor player, Tubby rates as one of the handful of world-class musicians this country has produced. And that's ignoring his talents on other saxes, flute, vibes and as a composer, arranger and leader.

Do yourself a favour this Christmas, Tim, and persuade Santa to bring you copies of *Tubby's Groove* and *Mexican Groove* where you will be able to hear prime examples of the many facets of Tubby's enormous natural talent.

Don Tarrent, Portsmouth

### Max (Not) Revealed

HOW INTERESTING to see the picture of Max Harrison in the November *Wm*. He is, after all, a mere normal earthling like myself and not, as I had wondered, an extra-terrestrial being (although, I confess, I had expected a younger man).

And why does he have those strange parenthetical "conversations" with 'Ed.' in his page? Can't he get him on the phone? We await enlightenment with great anticipation.

H. Ronaldson, Hounslow.

*Fooled you? That wasn't Max at all but a picture of World Latslawski, whose caption mysteriously fell off. Max is a much younger chap – RC.*

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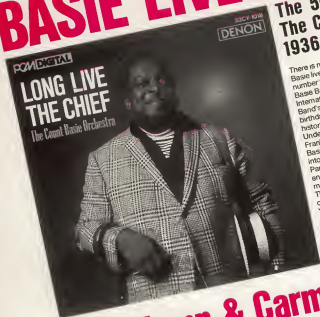
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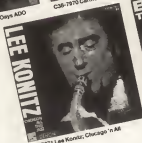
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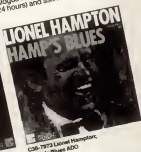
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